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„Retro-prescriptivism: how present-day attitudes affect our construction of the linguistic past“

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1. Introduction

The Oxford Dictionary of English defines *history* as "the study of past events" (2005: 823), which at once establishes not only the subject of history, but also points out its greatest problem: events that are past can only be studied indirectly, that is by drawing inferences from their consequences. Something that has happened is not observable in the present, but has to be reconstructed first through the use of appropriate evidence (in a broad sense of the word, including people, artefacts and other evidence). In a police investigation this evidence can be people witnessing the crime, the perpetrator's fingerprints or DNA traces. In a historical investigation of an event that happened more than a hundred years in the past, however, there usually are no people who can bear evidence, and instead the historian resorts to historical documents, archeological and paleontological findings and other clues from the past. It is then the historian's task to investigate the credibility of these witnesses (much like the police would do), and through these to achieve a reconstruction of the event or state of affairs in question.

Historical linguists, while falling into the category of historians, often seem to have to overcome an additional obstacle: the lack of human witnesses. While many chronologists throughout the history of humankind have reported events and happenings, only very few (in relation) have commented on the use of language. Thus, historical linguists have to investigate the artefact itself, without the benefit of a comment of a contemporary of the artefact. While this might seem to be an advantage, as the historical linguists can investigate unbiasedly, it also leaves more room for interpretation, and thus variation in the possible reconstructions.

The variation which can be found in the reconstruction of one event or state of affairs[1] is one of the aspects under investigation in this paper. Through analysing

[1] For the sake of convenience and to avoid repetition, the terms *event* and *state of affairs* will be used here to describe something that has been reconstructed as one event or one particular state of affairs at any given time. Furthermore, *the emergence of a standard English* should also be read as "what has been constructed as the emergence of a standard English".

the arguments and explanations used to justify the reconstruction of one event in twelve different historical linguistic textbooks, this study aims to demonstrate the degree of variation occurring in the discipline of historical linguistics generally, and the genre of historical linguistic textbooks specifically. The event in question is the reconstruction of the emergence of a standardised variety of English, which in all twelve textbooks under investigation here is treated as the direct ancestor of Modern Standard English.

The story of the development of a standard English promises to be a suitable case for this undertaking due to its singular position in the English language and its relation to matters of prescription and notions of correctness. This connection has led to a highly emotional and loaded discussion of standard and non-standard Englishes, not only within the field of linguistics but also in the public domain. Especially in Britain, issues of language have always been highly important matters, politically as well as socially. This public interest in the (hi)story of Standard English (henceforth also SE) is also evidenced by the fact that more and more commercial books are published on this topic (e.g. Bragg 2003 and Lerer 2007; but also Crystal 2005).

The second objective of this study is to investigate whether prescriptive attitudes to language change influence the reconstruction of the linguistic past. Milroy (2001, 2002 and 2006) has claimed that in the past, scholars have contributed to a deliberate misrepresentation of the history of the standard (see sections 3.1. and 3.2. for further details). While Milroy only cites a few examples dating back more than fifty years, the study presented in this thesis investigates a sample of twelve textbooks published between 1951 and 2008 to ascertain whether such policies can still be found in more modern texts.

More specifically, a central question in this study will be whether and in what way the attitudes of the authors to language change are connected to their representation of Standard English (and the reconstruction of its emergence), and also whether there is a correlation between the date of publication and the way in

which the emergence of a standard English is reconstructed. I shall investigate the genre of historical linguistic textbooks and see whether the conventions explained in section 4.1. apply to all textbooks in the sample.

In order to introduce the reader to the topic, relevant terms will be explained and definitions provided. This will be followed by an introduction into the relevant discourses used in the analysis as well as key texts already mentioned above. After this, a detailed account of how the data was selected and by what criteria it will be analysed will be provided, succeeded by the analysis of the texts as regards their content. This will be followed by a discussion of the findings as well as an examination of the findings regarding the key questions detailed above.

2. Terms and definitions

2.1. Language and dialect

The Yiddish linguist Max Weinreich famously related that after a lecture on *Problems in the History of the Yiddish Language*, a man from the audience approached him and presented him with his personal definition of what the difference between a language and a dialect is, saying that "[a] language is a dialect with an army and a navy.[2]" (1945: 13) This aphorism has often been cited in modern linguistics to point out the political questions connected to the linguistic problem of what constitutes a language. It also shows to a certain degree that it is difficult to give a purely linguistic definition of what a language is, as many linguists regard language as always being connected to its users.[3] For this thesis is it simply important to note some basic differences and explain in what way the two terms will be employed in this paper.

Language is understood to be a means of communication through signs (whether phonemes, graphemes or something else). Unfortunately, there is as yet no watertight definition in linguistics of what exactly a language is and in what way it is different from a dialect. It complicates matters further that the terms *language* and *dialect* are items of everyday language use, which most speakers seem to use without being aware of the lack of a clear definition. In the discipline of linguistics, a language is most commonly understood to be 'consisting of' dialects, thus implying a hierarchical relationship where *language* is superordinate to *dialect*. (Haugen 1966: 922, Trudgill 1999: 123) Non-linguists, on the other hand, often attach negative connotations to the term *dialect*, and use it to refer to what they perceive to be an 'inferior' variety (where 'The Standard' is seen as superior).

For the present study it suffices to be aware of the problematic nature of such terms and their use, in order to approach the text examples provided in section

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[2] Yiddish: shprakh iz a dialekt mit an armey un flot - אַ שפּראַך איז אַ דיאַלעקט מיט אַן אַרמיי און פֿלאָט

[3] For an interesting discussion on whether language exists outside and apart from its users see Lass (1980, 1997), as well as a critique by Milroy (2006).

five with some caution. We shall see that both terms are used in the texts without previous definition, which often makes it difficult to interpret what exactly an author means by using this term. Particularly problematic is the use of the term *dialect*, as it is often not made clear in the text which features of the dialect are being talked about (i.e. whether an author is referring to grammar, lexis, morphology, phonology, etc.). We shall discuss this issue in greater detail in sections 2.3. and 5.1.

In this paper, I will additionally use the term *variety* to refer to something that in a hierarchical relationship we would subordinate to *language*. As such it is a very loosely defined term, as I will use it to refer to very general regional differences (North American English vs. Australian English, for example), social differences (Middle-class New York vs. Working-class New York) and ethnical differences (London Bangladeshi vs. London Jamaican). Varieties in this sense are not clearly defined and delimited, yet the term is useful due to its lack of negative connotations in everyday language use.

2.2. Standard language

As the object of this study is to analyse the way in which the reconstruction of the supposed beginnings of the standardisation of the English language are presented in various historical linguistic textbooks, it is important to introduce some of the key concepts of standardisation and standard language. Even thought the concept of the standardisation process has largely been accepted by linguists, it is not at all certain that a. such a process really exists, and b. that it takes the form described by Haugen (see also Lodge's definition of what a standard language is below). As all of the texts assume that the English language in fact does have a standardised form, and most of them follow Haugen's classification, we shall have a closer look at Haugen's discourse, while approaching this topic critically).

The Norwegian-American linguist Einar Haugen has largely shaped today's understanding of what has been called the standardisation process, and his theory is referred to in introductory textbooks and specialised articles alike. In his article

"Dialect, Language, Nation" (1966), Haugen provides an explanation for why languages come to be standardised, and how the process works. According to Haugen, the need for a standardised language arises from the needs of an evolving nation, as language is an important factor in nation-building. Through the process of standardisation, a dialect is expanded (or, to use Haugen's terms, elaborated) to serve the changing linguistic needs of a community, and thus gains what Haugen calls "functional superiority" (1966: 927). The ultimate aim of standardisation is a minimum in variation (*codification*) and a maximum in function (*elaboration*) (Haugen 1966: 931; Milroy 2000: 13-14).

Haugen identifies four stages in the standardisation of a language: *selection*, *codification*, *elaboration* and *acceptance*. While Haugen presents these in a specific order and as if they happen once and are then completed, Milroy (2000: 14) points out that standardisation is an ongoing process which is never complete. This has to be so due to the needs of the language to adapt to new language situations, and thus permit some change, while inhibiting too much of it. Additionally, Milroy describes the characteristics of language standardisation as follows:

> [1.] the chief linguistic consequence of successful standardisation is a high degree of uniformity of structure. [...]
>
> [2.] standardisation is implemented and promoted primarily through written forms of language. [...]
>
> [3.] standardisation inhibits linguistic change and variability.
>
> Milroy 2000: 13-14

While such definitions of standard language clearly imply it being an actual variety that is being used by speakers for whatever reasons, the French philologist R. Anthony Lodge's understanding of standard language is quite a different one. He asserts that "[a] standard language is a set of ideas about what constitutes the best form of language, the form which everyone ought to imitate" (1998: 29), thus putting a strong focus on social norms and attitudes of language users and excluding actual language use. While such a definition might be functionally

problematic as it excludes actual language use, I think it captures the attitudes often attached to standard languages very well. Lodge's definition adds the dimension of perceived social prestige, as what becomes significant is what people **believe** to be the best form of the language, not whether this actually is so.

2.2.1. Selection

Haugen (1966: 932) points out that the selection of any one variety to become the standard can follow two main patterns: if a social elite already exists, he deems it natural that their vernacular should in time be selected for codification. If, however, such an elite is not in place, the selection of any one of many socially equal competing vernaculars will favour the speakers of the one selected, and thus *make* them the elite. This will be an interesting point to bear in mind in the analysis below, that is whether a text describes the embryonic standard as having been the language of the elite or whether the group using this vernacular subsequently became the elite.

Alternately, a completely new standard can be constructed, rather than choosing one vernacular for codification (Haugen 1966: 932-933). An example of a European language where standardisation (at least in part) followed this pattern is Norwegian, more precisely one of the two written standards for Norwegian, called *Nynorsk*. As Norway had not been a sovereign state for over four hundred years and had been in direct union with Denmark for the greatest part, Danish replaced Norwegian as the language of administration and of the elite in Oslo. Being removed from Copenhagen, however, the Danish written in Norway became increasingly similar to Norwegian dialect. The result thereof was the standard today called *Bokmål* (English: "book language", previously *Riksmål* - "language of the realm"). After gaining independence from Denmark in 1814, the linguist Ivar Aasen felt that a standard based upon the traditional Norwegian dialects would better represent the needs of Norway. Thus he travelled the country to study these dialects and in 1848 published a grammar of what would later be called *Nynorsk*. Rather than promoting a single traditional dialect, Aasen studied what all (or

most) of them had in common and updated this to the needs of modern society. While this new standard never reached the wide usage Bokmål enjoys, it is nonetheless of sufficient importance to be granted recognition alongside bokmål as one of the two standards for Norwegian.[4] (Hallaråker 2001)

Thus, Haugen characterises only the third type of standardisation as a process of selections, while for type one and two he would speak of the selection of a single, already existing variety.[5] All texts surveyed in this paper place Standard English either within the category of type one or two, and indeed it is hard to find any account of SE which would argue for the third type. None of the texts under investigation here suggests that any one individual (or group of individuals) travelled the country selecting features to be standardised (at this early stage in the supposed process). A more detailed analysis will be given in section 5.1., where the different accounts given in the texts will be discussed in this framework.

2.2.2. Codification

The second stage of standardisation (as defined by Haugen) is the one traditionally linked most closely to prescriptivist attitudes towards language. This is so because codification is the process of fixing the language, legitimising (usually) one variant and thereby excluding others. Excluded variants and features are subsequently characterised as "wrong" in the standard language, even though they are "correct" in a non-standardised dialect. An example of a grammatical construction that is excluded from Standard English is multiple negation, even though it is used in many dialects in the British Isles and beyond (Hughes, Trudgill and Watt 2005: 24).

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[4] This importance is social and political rather than linguistic, as only 10% of the population use nynorsk as their standard variety. This importance is reflected in federal and municipal laws, Norwegian broadcasting and print media and the fact that Nynorsk is taught as the first "foreign language" in those communities that use Bokmål.

[5] The singular - plural distinction is used to signify the difference of the selection of features from one variety and the selection of features from more than one variety. Whether these happen at the same time or at different times is not specified.

While codification (like standardisation) is an ongoing process, there have been periods in the history of the English language where there has been a stronger focus on this process than at other times. Especially the eighteenth century saw a lot of discussion of the state of the language. Watts explains that due to socio-political reasons (like the loss of the American colonies and the Napoleonic wars), language became more and more linked with the idea of a common national identity, expressed by a common language, amongst others. As this period also saw the emergence of some of the most acclaimed British writers and poets[6], the English language was seen to be reaching a near-perfect state (Watts 2000: 45-46). Even before that, essayists and writers like Jonathan Swift and Samuel Johnson did their best to lobby for a more fixed - and in their eyes therefore pure - state of the language. Most famous of these endeavours to codify the language is perhaps Johnson's "A Dictionary of the English Language" (1755), the first comprehensive monolingual dictionary of the English Language. The two-volume dictionary not only contained words, their meanings and examples by "the best writers" (Johnson 1755: cover), but also a grammar of English. Cameron (1995: 78-115) ascertains that while today the focus of grammar books and dictionaries is to present the actual use of the language by its speakers and thus to serve as a reference book for them, eighteenth century writings were focused on instructing and correcting.

The aforementioned belief that the English language reached its Golden Age in the eighteenth century has further implications reaching beyond the eighteenth century: if language indeed ever reached a state of perfection, any change would be deterioration.[7] We shall see that similar attitudes were present in the works of linguistic scholars, and that it has been suggested that such attitudes might

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[6] Watts' exclusion of earlier writers like Milton or Shakespeare might be attributed to the fact that the language at the time of these poets was still relatively 'unfixed', which can for example be seen in Shakespearean spelling and lexical innovation. I would deem the poetry, books and writers themselves less important than the fact that it supposedly co-occurred with what Watts has called an increase of nationalist tendencies (2000:45).

[7] As language change progresses, subsequent changes can also be seen as reverting to the original perfect state. Initially, however, all change away from the supposedly perfect state would been seen as deterioration.

influence the reconstruction of the linguistic past (see sections 5.1. and 5.2. for more detail).

2.2.3. Elaboration

The third stage of language standardisation is elaboration. While codification aims at a minimum of variation, elaboration calls for a maximum of function. While most linguists take this to refer to the expansion of vocabulary that has to take place in order for the standard to be used in all situations (also highly specialised ones), Trudgill (1999: 119-121) is quick to point out that elaboration also involves the differentiation of registers which are available to speakers of a language.

While elaboration has been defined as a part of standardisation by Haugen, it is by no means a process that only happens in standard language. All varieties of a language are subject to the needs of their speakers and would therefore be elaborated when the need arises. Such a need might be lexical innovations (in the form of coinages, borrowings, etc.) to refer to new things or concepts, such as newly discovered plants or animals, or technical innovations. An interesting example for elaboration of grammar can be found in Douglas Adams' science-fiction novel *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, where grammatical tenses have been elaborated to reflect the complicated relations made possible through time travel (2002: 213).

While this study is primarily concerned with textbook representations of what has been called - and constructed as - the *selection stage* of standardisation, it is important to note that by all accounts the English language underwent a major phase of elaboration not long before that. When the use of French declined in Britain due to the loss of Normandy and conflicts culminating in the Hundred Years' War, English underwent what in modern terms might be called a revival. The result was a large influx of French loanwords, which eventually came to be incorporated fully into the English language (Baugh & Cable 2002: 147 - 156). The story of this elaboration is told in most of the books under investigation and is in

many texts interpreted to be an important prerequisite for standardisation to happen.

2.2.4. Acceptance

The fourth stage of standardisation as described by Haugen is *acceptance*. He asserts that "a standard language [...] must have a body of users" (Haugen 1966: 933), which is why it is important for a group of speakers to adopt it if it does not already have a body of speakers. Haugen states that a standard language has to offer its speakers some advantage if the effort they have to make in learning it is to be justified. More often than not, this advantage comes in the form of power, as those proficient in the standard language often form a society's elite (Milroy and Milroy 1985, Crowley 2003). In fact, the standard not only has to be accepted as such by the people who use it, but also (maybe even especially) by those people who do not use it.

Like the other three stages, also this one has to occur all the time if a standardised variety of a language should reflect the needs of its users. Thus, if a new word or syntactic function is introduced into language use generally and subsequently is to be codified into the standard, those who use that standard have to accept it. Of course, the dictionary or grammar reference book can record a different usage, but if the body of users does not actually use this form, the dictionary or reference book becomes inaccurate. Thus we see that the power to accept or reject a variant as standardised lies with the people, rather than a governing body. Even in the often-cited example of French, over which the *Academie Française* assumes codifying power, the people decide what they do with 'their' language.[8]

[8] This is evidenced in the continuing use of phrases like "*le weekend*" by the French after the *Academie Française* rejected such uses as an unnecessary anglicism.

2.3. Standard English

The opinions about what Standard English is or is not are as numerous as linguists trying to define it. As a discussion of the numerous definitions is not the focus of this paper and would therefore exceed the scope, I will only discuss those issues which are immediately relevant to the objective of this paper.

While Lodge calls a standard language "a set of ideas" (1998: 29), Trudgill (2000: 120) assumes Standard English to be a dialect. While the former definition creates SE as a mental concept rather than an actual spoken or written variety, the latter implies a body of native speakers. For the purpose of this paper, Standard English will be treated as one variety of English among many others, defined by its orthography and grammar.[9]

Additionally, there is dispute about the fact whether Standard English - if its definition as an actual variety is accepted - occurs only in a written or also in a spoken form. While a solution to this problem is not immediately relevant to this paper, keeping in mind that a discussion exists is important for understanding some of the rationalisation in section 5.

When studying Standard English, one issue that has to be considered is the difference between *standard*, *uniform* and *norm*. In this paper, the term *norm* is used to refer to the variety which 'comes most naturally' to a speaker in a certain situation. Therefore, norms are individual to a speaker or a group of speakers, defined by various social parameters (like family or community). Following this definition, it might be the norm for a speaker from Yorkshire to say or write "I was stood at a bus stop" when talking to a family member, while in a more formal situation he or she might write or say the Standard English "I was standing at a bus stop". *Norm* is therefore in this paper understood to be dependent on the speaker and the situation.

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[9] I deliberately exclude aspects like lexicon and phonology, as I believe Standard English to be independent of them (see also Trudgill 1999).

Uniform, on the other hand, is a term used in this paper to describe a consistent state, one that lacks variation. A usage can be uniform without being standardised. In spelling this can occur when a word has not yet been codified (through inclusion in the dictionary, for example), but has already achieved uniform spelling. *Uniform* then simply signifies something that is the same for a body of users, whether it is formally standardised or not. *Standardised*, in contrast, refers to the state where a variety has been formally standardised by a governing body or through consensus of the users of the language, in this case English.

In this paper, *Standard English* (and SE) (with both words capitalised) and *Modern Standard English* will be used to refer to Modern Standard English, that is, its current standardised variety. The term is not used to signify that only one kind or variety of Standard English exists today, but rather has been chosen as a convenient term to be contrasted to its earlier (not yet fully standardised) or embryonic form. This form will be called *a standardised variety of English*, or - for short - *a standard English.* The use of different terms is supposed to reflect the de facto difference between the beginnings of standardised varieties of English and their earliest forms on one hand, and Modern Standard English on the other. To clarify the difference completely through an example, one could say that this thesis deals with the reconstruction in historical linguistic textbooks of the emergence of a standard English, and connects it to prescriptive attitudes often linked with Standard English.

3. Review of key texts and discourses

3.1. Linearity and (retrospective) historicity

As mentioned in the introduction, the problem of all historical studies is the inaccessibility of the data which would be needed to reconstruct a past event. It has been suggested by Milroy (2002, 2006), that in addition to variation and confusion arising from the lack of reliable sources, the reconstruction of the genesis of a standard English has faced another problem: Milroy suggest that the history of SE has been deliberately misrepresented by various linguistic historians in order to create what has been called *retrospective historicity* (Lodge 1993: 8). Milroy argues that this happens (or at least has happened) for the English language in general, especially through constructing English as if it had "a continuous history as a single entity" (Milroy 2000: 15; see also Milroy 2006: 154). This creation of (retrospective) historicity and thus legitimacy for the English language is also reflected in the history of Standard English, especially, of course, in its origins and early genesis, which will be the subject of the present investigation.

To achieve historicity, the modern English language is traced back through an unbroken line to the early Anglo-Saxon settlers arriving in England in the early fifth century AD. The retrospective historicity created thus is already established by the practice of referring to the language spoken by these early settlers as Old English, which can be connected to Modern English via Middle English and Early Modern English. To fix the date of the origin of English to the fifth century AD is rather arbitrary, as the Germanic settlers arriving on the British Isles at that time brought a language (or probably rather different dialects of a language) with them. The English language can therefore just as easily be traced back to continental Europe, as so-called Old English did in all likelihood not differ from Old Frisian very greatly (Milroy 2002:18). Yet it has been conventionalised that the beginnings of the English language should be fixed to the arrival of the Germanic settlers who were later to become *the English* (Milroy 2002: 19-24). We shall examine whether

this practice is detectable in the sample of textbooks in section 5.3., and discuss the findings in 6.3.

Milroy asserts that "to show that it is the 'same' language [Old English as Modern English] on purely internal grounds actually requires some ingenuity", and that "[i]t is much easier to show that it is different." (Milroy 2002: 19) Thus we might conclude that the classification of this language having been an early form of English is political, rather than based on linguistic argument. This is also reflected in the fact that up to the nineteenth century, what is today commonly referred to as Old English was usually called Anglo-Saxon (Crystal 2003: 8). The appearance of linearity is created here simply by changing the term by which the language of the Germanic settlers is referred to.

There are, however, also differing accounts: Crowley (1989: 113), for example, shows that the Victorian editors of the *New (Oxford) English Dictionary* fixed the beginnings of English quite confidently to the year 1258, which he considers to be more sensible on linguistic grounds (if not the exact year, then at least the century). Examinations of texts from the thirteenth century show a language which is grammatically as well as lexicographically much more closely related to Modern English than to the language of King Alfred, for instance. This would indicate that something significant must have happened between the ninth or tenth century and the thirteenth century to explain this drastic change. Indeed, upon examination of the political history of the British Isles, one explanation lends itself to the reader: the Norman Conquest following the year 1066.

While Milroy might be right in saying that Old English and Middle English are structurally different from each other (though the degree of this difference is not certain), his assertion that this change happened spontaneously rather than gradually is not necessarily supported by linguistic evidence:

> [Those changes which were not the result of the Norman Conquest] were a continuance of tendencies that had begun to manifest themselves in Old English. These would have gone on even without the

> Conquest, but they took place more rapidly because the Norman invasion removed from English those conservative influences that are always felt when a language is extensively used in books and is spoken by an influential educated class.
>
> Baugh and Cable 2002: 158

While it is impossible for me to assess the truthfulness of either statement, it is noteworthy that there is, in fact, an interpretation of the observable language change which is grounded in language internal evidence. Even if Milroy's claims are exaggerated, I do not believe this to disqualify his statements about the creation of retrospective historicity: even if there is linguistic evidence of an unbroken ancestry this reconstruction of the Middle English story can be used to reinforce the socio-political position of (Standard) English in the way Milroy has described it.

3.2. Prescriptive attitudes to language change

The idea that historical linguistic texts should deliberately present the history of the standard in a certain way to further an ideology (prescriptivism) is not a new one. Numerous linguists, among them Milroy (2002: 10-11), Watts (2000: 34) and Crowley (1999: 272) have repeatedly commented on the fact and drawn attention to it. Very often such comments focus on the nature of language change, that is, that many commentators in the past as well as the present refer to some changes as corruptions, while others are considered to be legitimate changes. From the point of view of descriptive linguistics, such a distinction does of course not exist; all change is merely change, that is a necessary part of language (Saussure 1986: 139). Milroy (2002: 10-14) dedicates a whole subchapter of his introduction to *Alternative Histories of English* (Trudgill and Watts 2002) to the matter of "Legitimate and illegitimate change", focusing in great part on the role played by linguists and English philologists. He quotes the noted English lexicographer and linguist Henry Cecil Wyld as distinguishing between legitimate varieties of English - Standard English and rural dialects - and illegitimate varieties - urban dialects - to which he referred as *vulgar (*Wyld 1927: 56 in Milroy 2002: 11). Already

a generation before Wyld, the English philologist and phonetician Henry Sweet argued along similar lines, saying that "most of the present English dialects are so isolated in their development and so given over to disintegrating influences as to be [...] generally inferior to the standard dialect" (Sweet 1971: 12). Regarding such sentiments it is not surprising that the study of urban dialects was neglected for a long time in the study of the English language. [10]

The attitude apparent in the quotations from Wyld and Sweet, but also found in Skeat or later in Jespersen, to a great extent explains why the writing of the history of the English language has often only been limited to its standard(s). Variation in the language, it seems, is only legitimised when no standard is available, and even then, different dialects are treated as if they were standardised, homogenous entities, similar to the way modern dialects are described. Evidence to support the claim that variation is seen as erroneous can be found in many descriptions of Middle English, where variation in spelling has often been attributed to ignorance or neglect, rather than being described as systematic[11]. One very common argument for explaining variation in the spelling of a single scribe was to claim that he was practically a foreigner, who did not know or understand the language very well, and thus made many mistakes in copying from earlier manuscripts. According to Milroy, this view has recently changed as no evidence to substantiate such claims could be found. Yet this attitude towards variations very clearly shows how language is preferably treated as a well-ordered, standardised system, even if this is not the case (Milroy 2000: 20).

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[10] While Sweet's statement includes rural dialects as well, these were generally studied quite thoroughly, as they were seen to be holding clues to the "legitimate" development of English, as they were perceived to be pure and direct ancestors of Old English.

[11] While it may be true that much of variation in spelling was erroneous and unsystematic, some linguists (e.g. Scragg 1975) argue that it was sometimes for various reasons was used deliberately. According to Scragg, some poets used variation consciously to highlight the versatility of their language.

3.3. Meta-discourse on historical linguistic textbooks

In addition to Milroy's many articles on the influences of prescriptivist attitudes on the discipline of historical linguistics (especially Milroy 2002 and 2006), a number of linguists have occupied themselves with the genre of historical linguistic textbooks. Most prominent among those, after Milroy, is perhaps Laura Wright, who challenges the conventions of historical linguistic writing. Additionally, Leith's critique of this genre is presented in 5.3.8.

In her article "On the Writing of the History of Standard English", Wright claims that "there are two main strands" (1992: 110) in historical linguistic textbooks concerning the emergence of a standard English:

> Those handbooks which give a brief treatment invoke a triangle of London, Oxford and Cambridge as the seats of power and learning and tell us that Standard English is an amalgam of those dialects, with no further evidence. Those that go into the matter in depth, namely Samuels (1972:165-170), Fisher (1977; 1984) and Görlach (1990:18-24), are indebted mainly to the work of one man: Eilert Ekwall. In many publications Ekwall questioned the changes in the fourteenth century London dialect, why it changed from being Southern Middle English to Midlands Middle English around the thirteen fifties, and whether London English of the turn of the century really was the prototype for Standard English. He alone considered business texts as data, but unfortunately his pioneering work has been subsequently misrepresented.
>
> Wright 1992: 110.

Subsequently, Wright claims that this "misrepresentation" arose because scholars understood Ekwall's hypothesis as fact, even though this was not at all supported by his findings. This hypothesis stated that "wealthy, influential and powerful Midlanders did influence London speech by means of status rather than number" (1992: 111). As we shall see in section 5, this account is often used to explain the variation recorded in letters and manuscripts from fifteenth-century London.

To this Wright juxtaposes her own interpretations of Ekwall's findings as well as her own findings, and argues for a stronger influence of the merchant class on the embryonic standard than perviously assumed (1996: 10). She dismisses what she calls "[t]he loose common sense theory that Standard English grew out of educated London, Oxford and Cambridge speech [... because this] ignores the very real present day gulf between London and Standard English" (1992: 113). We shall also see this kind of reasoning in some of the texts discussed in section 5.

While Wright finds fault with traditional accounts given in historical linguistic textbooks because they (in her opinion) underestimate the influence of one group of people, Jonathan Hope provides a critique of how the supposed selection stage is presented and explains why it is so popular:

> The S[ingle] A[ncestor] D[ialect] hypothesis is also highly teachable, because it leaves no loose ends, and because (in its 'Chancery Standard' realisation) it provides a clear motivation for changes: they happened because an identifiable group of people made identifiable decisions.
>
> 2000: 50

Hope criticises Single Ancestor Dialect hypotheses on the grounds that "Standard English features can be traced to an inconveniently wide range of dialects" (ibid.), which he claims "most historians of the language accept" (ibid.). As a solution he offers the explanation that in the case of Standard English, there was a range of *selections* rather than just one *selection* (see also 2.2.1.). From this he concludes that standardisation "might be much more of a 'natural' linguistic process than has previously been thought." (2000: 51) We shall see in section 5 that similar approaches can be found in some of the texts.

4. Methodology

4.1. Selection of the texts

Twelve historical linguistics textbooks were chosen for the survey. They were selected on grounds of popularity (as evidenced by number of editions published and citations in similar publications), date of publication and relevance. What is meant by relevance here is that books should be aimed primarily at undergraduate students of linguistics and should cover the history of the English language as completely as possible rather than just introducing one specific period. Additionally, only books published as a single volume were considered, excluding, however, workbooks published alongside textbooks. The textbooks in alphabetical order are (with the year of publication of the edition I used given first and the year of the first publication given in square brackets):

- John Algeo and Thomas Pyles (2004 [1964]) - The Origins and Development of the English Language
- Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable (2002 [1951]) - A History of the English Language
- Norman F. Blake (1996) - A History of the English Language
- Laurel J. Brinton and Leslie K. Arnovick (2006) - The English Language. A Linguistic History
- Dennis Freeborn (1998 [1992]) - From Old English to Standard English
- Manfred Görlach (1997 [1974]) - The Linguistic History of English
- David Graddol, Dick Leith, Joan Swan, Martin Rhys and Julia Gillen (2007) - Changing English
- Dick Leith (1997 [1983]) - A social history of English
- Dan McIntyre (2009 [2008]) - History of English: a resource book for students
- John McLaughlin (1970) - Aspects of the History of English
- Barbara Strang (1991 [1970]) - A History of English
- Elly van Gelderen (2006) - A History of the English Language

The date of publication is relevant, as the books were chosen to represent a sample of the genre of the last fifty to sixty years. This is especially important as the research objective is, amongst others, to examine whether the way in which the presumed beginnings of a standard English are represented in a text has changed over time. Where relevant, more than one edition of a text was examined in order to ascertain whether the representation of the event under examination here might have been changed in the course of time. As no significant difference was found in the relevant chapters of those texts, however, only the newer texts have been cited for reasons of convenience. The original publication date is always given where it is important to state it, otherwise the publication date of the relevant edition is provided.

Additionally, the texts could be roughly divided into those texts which are more concerned with the external history of the English language, those which focus more on the internal history, and those who seek to combine both aspects as best they can. The external history of English are the socio-political events influencing language change, like for example the Germanic settlement in Britain, the Norman Conquest, or - more recently - post-colonial immigration into Great Britain. The internal history of the language, on the other hand, focuses on how features of the language (like syntax, morphology, phonology, lexicon, etc.) change through the course of time.

In section 5.3., the analysis will be carried out with data taken from the newest editions available. This is done because it is desirable to compare and contrast the texts as much as possible, and in order to eliminate differences which are purely temporal (that is, developments that could not have been foreseen decades ago), editions from the 1990s and 2000s have been used where available. While the study aims to show whether historical reconstructions of the emergence of SE have changed over time, the temporal parameter was deliberately excluded from this question. The analysis in 5.3. is used primarily to examine the presence of

prescriptive attitudes in the texts, not whether and how these have changed over time.

The textbook genre selected for this study is an interesting one and promises to yield intriguing data. When undertaking such an endeavour it is important to first be clear about the constraints that govern university textbook writing. In my experience, almost all introductory style textbooks work in a similar way, as they are designed to do similar things, that is provide an introduction into a certain topic to undergraduate students, who are not necessarily familiar with any of the concepts and discourses employed in the discipline. It furthermore seems to me that what (almost) all introductory style textbooks have in common is that they present their own argumentations as valid, often disregarding others. Such an approach creates a well-ordered story or narrative, which might make the teaching of the subject easier.[12]

It complicates the analysis of linguistic textbooks even further that many textbooks (in my own experience asa student) do not specify the sources of the evidence that their reconstructions are based on in the same way that would be expected from an article published in a peer-reviewed journal, for example. Occasionally, texts refer to other, similar textbooks as evidence, which in turn do not provide their sources, thus making the citing process somewhat circular. The inclusion of specialised articles (or part of them) to refer students to where evidence might be found seems to be a relatively recent development, which will be investigated in section 5.3. The most common practice, however, seems to be to make statements without providing evidence, which often makes it very difficult to find out why a certain text argues in a certain way.

As the constraints governing the writing of a textbook severely restrict what any single author can do, this study will also look at whether (and if so, in what way) the genre of historical linguistic textbooks has changed over time. It might be that

[12] This is my personal impression gained through my experience as an undergraduate student, and will be confirmed or contradicted in the course of the analysis.

new teaching techniques lead to a different way of presenting fact and argument, or that a different approach to the discipline of historical linguistics leads to a renovation of the textbook genre.

4.2. Focus of the analysis

The present thesis does not have a central research hypothesis, but rather has several research objectives:

- to record the variation to be found in the reconstruction of the emergence of a standard English in twelve historical linguistic textbooks
- to investigate whether prescriptive attitudes to language change influence the authors' reconstruction of the history of English
- to examine whether the reconstruction has changed over the last fifty years.

I became interested in the issue at hand through reading various books and articles on the politics of English, through which I developed a special interest in the influence of prescriptivist attitudes on linguistics. While I was introduced to this topic through various articles by James Milroy (especially 2001 and 2006) and was very taken with his line of argumentation, I tried to withdraw my personal attitudes as much as possible from the study, so as not to influence the outcome through my bias. My approach is summed up very well by a statement of the fictional philosopher Wonko the Sane, one of the earthly characters in Douglas Adams' *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish*, who claims that

> a scientist must be absolutely like a child. If he sees a thing, he must say that he sees it, whether it was what he thought he was going to see or not. See first, think later, then test. But always see first. Otherwise you will only see what you were expecting.
>
> Wonko the Sane (Adams 2002: 587)

One of the primary focuses of the present study is to investigate how the writers reconstruct the alleged beginnings of Standard English, both linguistically as well as socio-economically. To that end, the relevant passages from every text were

selected and subjected to a close critical reading which focused both on the theories the texts endorse as well as the arguments used to support those theories. As will be seen in the analysis of the data, the reading found two main theories used to explain the beginnings of Standard English, with eight arguments to support them. The correlations and restrictions between theory and arguments will be detailed in sections 5.1. and 5.2. of this paper, and are highlighted systematically in tables 1 and 2 in the appendix.

In addition to the main research questions set out above, one additional issue was specifically addressed in the survey: how they account for the linguistic variation found in the early embryonic standard. As discussed in section 3.1, Milroy (2002: 19-21) claims that the linguistic variation evident in the standard (and its embryonic form) have often been disregarded by those who seek to create a history which glorifies the standard variety of English.

In order to then find out if and in what way prescriptive attitudes influence the authors' reconstructions, I shall analyse the way the writers present the history of the English language as a whole. That is, whether the history presented is a history only of the standard variety (or even varieties), what justification is given in such a case, and what implications this has for the reconstruction analysed in 5.1. and 5.2. Through this examination I hope to get an insight into the authors' attitudes towards language change, which I read as an indicator for prescriptive attitudes in accordance with Watts (2000: 32) and Milroy (2006: 146-148). In order to then ascertain the influence of prescriptive attitudes of the authors on their reconstructions of the supposed emergence of a standard English, the collected data and interpretations from sections 5.1. and 5.2. on the one hand, and 5.3. on the other hand are going to be compared and contrasted to each other.

5. Analysis

5.1. Different types of Middle English Standard English

The traditional story of English tells us that English was re-established as the language of the ruling class following the decline of French after the loss of Normandy (cf. also 2.2.3.). As the analysis will show, some of the texts describe this situation as ideally suited for the emergence of a standard, as the functions previously occupied by French (and even Latin) now came to be filled by English.

The English linguist Michael Luis Samuels (1963) interpreted his findings in Middle English dialectology to indicate the emergence of more than one embryonic standard in the fourteenth century. He describes four *Types* of a standardised variety of English, each with specific characteristics:

Type I was a standard which was largely in use before 1430, spread through John Wycliffe and the Lollard movement. According to Samuels, this standard was based on a Central Midlands dialect (used in such areas as Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire), and was used in and spread through Bible translations and other religious writings.

Type II, essentially a London standard, was found in the Auchinleck manuscript, a collection of English romances. While Samuels treats the manuscript as an exemplar of London dialect of the time, some scholars have objected that five or six scribes worked on the manuscript, each writing in their own dialect, which was not always necessarily a London dialect. (cf. Wiggins 2004)

While, according to Samuels, Type II showed some East Anglian features due to large-scale immigration from that area, *Type III*, also a London standard, reflected the immigration from the Midlands counties in the late fourteenth century. This *Type* is best know through the writings of Chaucer and Hoccleve, which Samuels argues accurately reflects the language of London at that time.

Samuels' *Type IV* is what he calls the Chancery Standard (henceforth also ChS). The Chancery (or also Chancellery) was one of the two main administrative offices, the other being the Exchequer. By the 13th century the Chancery was moved from the royal court to Westminster, which at that time was about two miles outside the city of London (see figure 1 for a 'Plan of London about 1300'). [13] The head of the office, the Chancellor, oversaw all of the documents issued by the crown (with exception to those published by the Exchequer and justiciars), and held the official seal of the King. Samuels argues that it is this standard, *Type IV*, which forms the basis of present day written Standard English. (Samuels 1963)

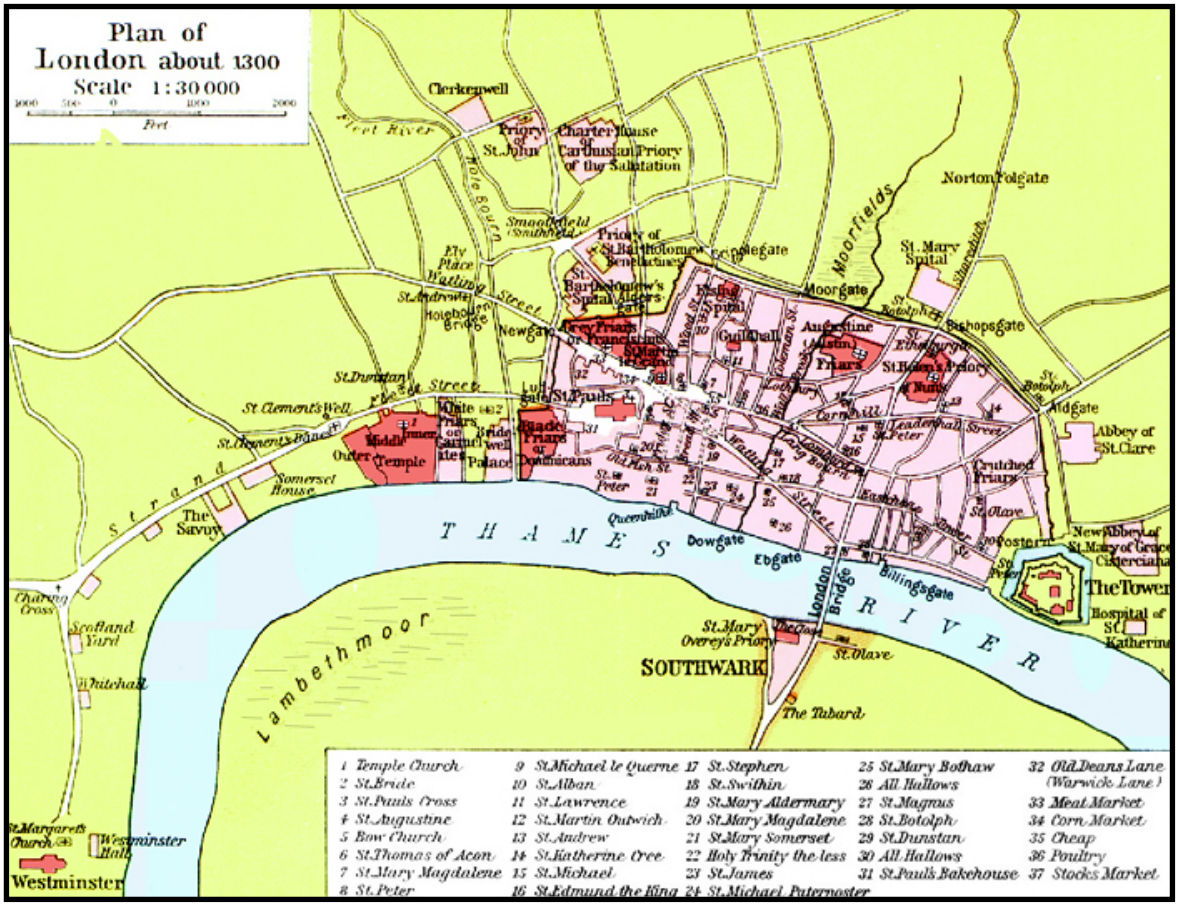

Figure 1: The position of Westminster (left bottom corner) in relation to the City of London.

A problem in Samuels' discussion which is also reflected in the sample of texts is the lack of a definition in what way these embryonic standards were supposedly standardised. While Modern Standard English is characterised through a

[13] It is important to keep this distance in mind, as we will later see in the discussion of the different textbooks that some of the writers equate Westminster with London.

relatively fixed syntax and spelling (with only minor regional variation), it is not always clear what exactly is meant by the term *standardised* in the texts. In many cases the term denotes fixed spelling and possibly syntax, though sometimes it also refers to the lexicon. Sometimes it is possible to infer from the examples what exactly is meant, yet sometimes it remains obscure.

As we shall see in the analysis below, most of the twelve texts can be interpreted as arguing within the parameters set up by Samuels, even though only some of them directly refer to his research. For the sake of convenience, the texts have been divided into two groups: those arguing for Chancery Standard, and those arguing for London Standard being the ancestor of Modern Standard English. However, the situation is not as unambiguous as such a classification might suggest. While it is possible to interpret all of the twelve texts of being in favour of one of the theories, the interpretation is sometimes made difficult because arguments in the texts seem to be contradictory. As will be discussed in 6.2 and 6.4., explaining and giving evidence in the support of more than one theory does not necessarily have to be interpreted as inconsistency, as it can be a mark of thoroughness.

It will be interesting to see how different texts deal with this variation, as most of them do, indeed, comment on it in some way.

5.1.1. Chancery Standard

As said above, it was not always easy to exactly classify which of Samuels' four *Types* any text argued for, or whether a theory was entirely new altogether. According to my interpretation and definition, six of the twelve texts argue for Chancery Standard being the direct ancestor of Modern Standard English. This group of six is, however, not a very uniform group. The oldest of these texts is Strang (1970), followed by Görlach (1974) and Blake (1996). The remaining three texts are all rather recent, beginning with van Gelderen (2006), Graddol et al. (2006), with McIntyre (2008) being the newest one.

5.1.1.1. Strang (1970)

The first edition of Strang's book was published only some seven years after Samuels' paper introducing the four different types of standard in the Middle English period, and indeed follows his classification quite closely:

> What was new in III [1570-1370] was a threefold development: [...] second, the evolution of a sequence of competing types, of which one (the direct ancestor of PE Standard) dominated from about 1430.
>
> Strang 1970: 161

> A standardised written form of English arising out of this phase of London development corresponds to Type II in a classification of late medieval Standards in Samuels, 1963; [...] there follows, from the middle of the 14c, a new kind of written English, of strongly Midland character, corresponding to Professor Samuel's Type III, and best know to literary students as the language of Chaucer [...]
>
> Strang 1970: 162

> It is written in a kind of Standard, Type IV or Chancery Standard, which thereafter reigns supreme. The difference lies in the presence of features of more Central Midland origin than those of Type III, [...]
>
> Strang 1970: 163

The source of the linguistic variation still to be found in Modern Standard English (i.e. the Northern, Southern and Midlands features) is not explained, as there is no connection drawn between the immigration responsible for the Midlandish features in *Type III* standard and *Type IV* Chancery Standard. Indeed, Strang only mentions that ChS featured more Central Midlands characteristics than Type III, without giving any explanation for their presence.

5.1.1.2. Görlach (1974)

Görlach's account of the emergence of a standard English is one of these mentioned above where some interpretation becomes necessary:

> It was not until the late fourteenth century that the expansion of the public functions of the vernacular, which replaced French in many of

> the written domains, necessarily led to a new standard language. This was based on the educated usage of London/Westminster, the seat of the court, the chancery, the centre of commerce and, from 1476, of book printing.
>
> Görlach 1997: 16

The use of "London/Westminster" is remarkable, as it is one of these instances mentioned above, where (at least) the varieties of London and Westminster English are treated as the same. This stands in strong contradiction to Samuels, who argues quite strongly that the written varieties of Westminster and London were quite different at that period. This opinion is also held by many other linguists, as the analysis will show. Görlach, however, does not draw any attention to the controversiality of his assertion, and indeed does not give any justification for it.[14]

Significant seems also the phrasing "necessarily led to a new standard language", as this *necessity* is also later taken up by Fisher in his argument for Chancery English. Görlach implies that the sudden lack of French as the medium of official documents made it necessary for English to be standardised. As has been pointed out before, it has been suggested by historical linguists that the decline of French led to an elaboration of function in English. In how far this consequently and "necessarily" led to standardisation is not quite clear, especially as French at that time was not very far advanced in the standardisation process (cf. Lodge 1993 for a discussion of the different theories). Had French been standardised at the time, this might in turn have led to speeding up the standardisation process in English. However, such a line of argumentation can only ever be hypothetical. It seems, then, that Görlach's claim is an instance where the constraints of the textbook genre become apparent.

[14] As Görlach names the seat of the court and the chancery as important influences, I interpreted his argumentation to be in favour of Chancery Standard.

5.1.1.3. Blake (1996)

Blake's reconstruction of the history of the English language is not only presented in this monograph, but also in the *Cambridge History of the English Language* (1992), of which he was the editor. While Görlach's account amounted to no more than a page, in fact a little less, Blake dedicated a whole chapter to the "Political, Social and Pedagogical Background to the New Standard" (1996: 172-202). Like Strang, Blake ties in with Samuels' classification, and argues for *Type IV* or Chancery Standard. Indeed, Blake makes an even stronger case for this theory, as he argues that

> More and more people used English in public and official gatherings; all that was needed was a push from someone to make English the official written language as well. That push came from the Lancastrian monarchy.
>
> Blake 1996: 174

Thus, he argues more than any other of the six scholars supporting the Chancery Standard theory for a strong influence of the crown in form of King Henry V:

> Consequently we may accept that the decision to write the letters in English was one taken personally by the king. In this respect Henry V gave the necessary impetus to establish English as the official written language in much the same way as Alfred in the ninth century had made the English of Wessex the standard language of his kingdom. In both cases what was important is that a king should give the necessary impetus to establish a certain form of English as the standard. Once that step had been undertaken, the political backing of the monarch was less significant because the standard developed its own momentum and its promotion and refinement passed into the hands of scribes and scholars.
>
> Blake 1996: 175

It is interesting how quickly Blake jumps from the King deciding to write in English (as opposed to French or Latin) to a certain *kind*, or variety, being established as a standard. The analogy with King Alfred is also highly significant in view of what has previously been said about historicity and linearity, where the

history of English is traceable through different standardised versions (see also section 5.3.). Blake furthermore implies a conscious decision to be underlying the establishment of a standard, not only that of the King, but also that of the scholars, who promoted and refined the standard. This view of the standard as having been consciously manufactured is not at all uncontested. Indeed, the passage by Görlach quoted above rather implies a necessary 'natural' development of the standard, which arose out of the need of the speakers. Blake, on the other hand, emphasises the needs of a growing nation, especially those of the bureaucratic forces needed to maintain and build such a nation, much in accordance with Haugen's claims (1966: 925). We will see in section 5.2.1. that the argument of the monarchy being directly responsible for the establishment of the standard is not a widely used one.

Another interesting feature in the Blake text, which can actually be found in quite a number of texts, is a somewhat confusing statement on the newly evolving standard: Blake writes that "[a] standard language is a taught language which each individual has to learn whatever his or her own pronunciation" (1996: 173). As explained in section 2.3., the term *Standard English* is most consistently used to refer to a written standard, while there is substantial confusion and disagreement about whether it should also denote a spoken standard. Yet while Blake's statement might be true today, when Standard English is the variety taught in schools throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland (as decreed by the Education Reform Act 1988), in its beginnings, a standardised variety of English very likely had a more limited impact (because considerably fewer people learned to write, amongst other reasons).

5.1.1.4. Graddol et al. (2007)

Graddol and Leith's (the contributors working on the relevant section in the book; 2007) reconstruction of the emergence of a standard English immediately reads very differently from the three older texts discussed above. While Graddol and Leith also argue in favour of one particular origin theory, they justify their choices

and try to explain any confusing issues, rather than disregarding them completely. Overall, the chapter in *Changing English* reconstructing the supposed emergence of a standard English, "Modernity and English as a National Language", follows Haugen's taxonomy and explains the development through the four steps *selection, elaboration, codification* and *implementation* (*acceptance*). The most relevant sections for the present study are, of course, those discussing the selection stage.

While Graddol and Leith quite clearly argue for Chancery Standard, they nonetheless equate this to some point with London English, which is - as mentioned in the discussion of Görlach's text above - problematic:

> By the mid 1440s English was increasingly becoming the automatic choice for documents emanating from the crown. But it was a particular variety of English, essentially a London variety of the south-east Midlands dialect. A written form of this was developed by scribes working in that part of the royal administration known as the Chancery.
>
> This 'Chancery English' was less subject to the internal variation characteristic of earlier kinds of Middle English. [...] Many Chancery forms are the same as those used in print today and scholars, on the whole, regard this variety as the precursor of Standard English. Certainly Chancery scribes, such as the West Saxon scribes of the Winchester scriptorium, seem to have tried to eliminate variations in spelling, especially where these were based on local or individual pronunciations, as they respelt documents they copied according to their own conventions. The practice of regularising spellings is part of the process of standardisation: in fact, spellings are probably the easiest aspect of language to standardise.
>
> Graddol et al. 2007: 72

Even though Graddol and Leith argue for a strong influence of the Midlands on the developing standard, it does not become quite clear whether they would argue that this variation arose because of different linguistic backgrounds of the scribes themselves, or whether they merely sought to represent in their spellings the variation probably found in London due to immigration. Given the fact that Graddol and Leith argue for "a London variety of the south-east Midlands dialect" (2007: 72), it might be the latter.

It is interesting to note that Graddol and Leith credit the scribes with actively seeking to standardise spelling, and refer to apparently established conventions. When and by whom these conventions might have been established is not explained, however. While so far this account does not seem to differ greatly from Blake's, for example, Graddol and Leith qualify their initial statement in the next section:

> Standardisation in English, however, was only partly a deliberate process. It resulted from a combination of social and economic conditions, though, as we will see, it was helped along by the activities of a large number of people. It is also important to note that standardisation in English has only been partly achieved. [...]
>
> Sociolinguists have studied how reduction in variation in form (Haugen's first dimension) arises in speech communities without formal intervention by governments or language planners. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985, p. 187) proposed a phenomenon that they call **focusing.** A focused linguistic community is one in which there is a strong sense of norms. There are four key 'agencies' of focusing:
>
> 1 Close daily interaction in the community.
>
> 2 The mechanisms of an education system.
>
> 3 A sense of common cause or group loyalty, perhaps due to the perception of a common threat.
>
> 4 The presence of a powerful model, such as the usage of a leader, a poet, a prestige group or a set of religious scriptures.
>
> Graddol et al. 2007: 84

In this way, Graddol and Leith manage to combine two theories: rather than arguing for SE either having been deliberately manufactured or developed spontaneously, they argue for both. This is an instance of a text providing more than one explanation and leaving the interpretation to the reader, as explained in 4.1. This approach not only takes into account the power of the social or intellectual elite, but also the power of the large body of language users who are not the elite but certainly contribute substantially to language change, as they are the largest group of users. This theory of focusing might, in turn, also account for the origin of the above mentioned convention that the scribes adhered to: certainly

scribes interacted closely on a daily basis; the Chancery not only produced official documents but also trained scribes, thus in itself a sort of education system; the necessity to produce documents which might be understood by people from different dialect backgrounds could be seen as a common cause; and finally the powerful model might be that of the Chancellor or any superior.

Finally, Graddol and Leith do not argue for this developing English standard to have been written in stone and be the ultimate point of reference for anyone using English today. Rather they conclude that "Standard English remains something of an ideal, an imaginary form of English that is often rhetorically appealed to but never clearly identified" (Graddol et al. 2007: 84), which mirrors the definition of standard languages by Lodge (1998: 29).

5.1.1.5. McIntyre (2008)

McIntyre uses a similar strategy to that of Graddol et al. (2007), as he also combines Chancery English with London English in his argument, while at the same time arguing for Chancery Standard being the ancestor of Modern Standard English:

> Chancery English was a form of the East Midlands dialect and it is from the form of East Midlands dialect that Standard Present Day English derives.
>
> The rise of the so-called Chancery English has much to do with the power and wealth of the merchant classes trading in London at the time, whose dialect it was. This and the fact that the royal court was based in London meant that the dialect was associated with powerful people - and, as we have already seen, power equals prestige.
>
> McIntyre 2009: 22

Thus, McIntyre at the same time argues for Chancery Standard as saying that Chancery is essentially the variety used by the merchant classes in London. The matter is confused further as McIntyre refers to Samuels, citing the four different types of standard, which implies that when McIntyre refers to Chancery English he does indeed mean what Samuels called *Type IV*. Consequently we have a

similar situation as with Graddol et al. (2007): McIntyre also does not provide any evidence for Chancery English being the same as the variety used by certain people (at least) in London, yet this lack of sources is a general shortcoming of the genre, as already argued above. He does, however, cite Nevalainen and Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2006: 271) to support his claim that "Present Day English derives ultimately from the East Midlands dialect" (McIntyre 2009: 20). While this statement at first glance seems to say largely the same as the other texts cited here, there is one significant difference: the wording seems to imply that **all** varieties of "Present Day English" can be traced back to the East Midlands dialect[15]. It depends, of course, on what McIntyre refers to with *Present Day English*. Most commonly it is a synonym of what is called Modern English, and in this sense McIntyre's statement would quite clearly not make a lot of sense. If, however, he uses the term to refer to Standard English, it is in fact the theory corroborated by many of the other texts under investigation here. The term is nevertheless very problematic as many people (linguists and non-linguists alike) do actually equate Standard English with the English language as a whole (c.f. 5.3. for further details).

While Graddol and Leith (2007) do not account for the variation found in the developing standard and Modern Standard English alike, McIntyre does make an observation which is highly interesting:

> It should be noted, however, that this 'standard' was not entirely a regional dialect. It would have included elements of other dialects as London-based writers originally from elsewhere in the country struggled to adapt to the emerging standard.
>
> 2009: 23

It does not become quite clear from this statement whether the mentioned "London-based writers" are Chancery scribes or not, but it does make an interesting observation: a presumably London-based standard was emerging

[15] Throughout the text, McIntyre uses the term *Present Day English* to refer to all forms of recent Modern English, as if it was the parent above all regional, social or ethnical varieties.

which writers struggled to adapt to and in the process added features of their own dialects, thus creating a new dialect which was "not entirely [...] regional" (ibid.).

While McIntyre argues for Chancery Standard, he also quotes other scholars' points of view, and allows some space for alternative histories. To that end, McIntyre quotes Benskin (2004) and Crystal (2005), who both argue for the Chancery having been less influential than previously believed. McIntyre dedicates almost half a page to these alternative accounts, as he uses them both to show how accounts given by scholars can differ from each other, and to account for the variation which can be found between fifteenth century Chancery spellings and those found in Modern Standard English. McIntyre concludes this by saying that "[t]he point is that not all of these norms would necessarily have originated from Chancery." (McIntyre 2009: 22) We shall see in 5.3.9. that this approach to reconstructing the history of English is consistent throughout the book.

5.1.1.6. van Gelderen (2006)

What was to me most striking in van Gelderen is the limited time-span she allows for the development of a standard after English replaced Latin and French as the medium of writing:

> Scribes working at the Chancery began writing in English (rather than Latin) in 1420 and, by the 1430s, a standard had evolved. The Chancery produced a huge number of documents, and this was connected to the rise of London as a major center for trade and politics.
>
> van Gelderen 2006: 15

Thus, van Gelderen only allows for ten years for the initial formation of a standard, which is much less time than other texts estimate. She does, however, say that "Chancery English is characterized by relatively free spelling" (ibid.), so it might just be that she refers to an early stage in the development of Chancery Standard than other texts have done. If spelling was supposedly as yet variable, that raises the question which features of the variety were standardised (especially as Graddol et al. argues that spelling was the feature most easily standardised). If

not spelling, then (to me) the most likely candidate would by syntax, but as van Gelderen does not specify this clearly, it is impossible to say what she meant.

A feature of van Gelderen's text which is quite unusual for the genre is the use of hedging. While most of the texts described here present their reconstruction of the evolution of a standard English as fact, as if the history was quite clear and uncontested, van Gelderen stresses that what she presents is one possible account only:

> In *The Emergence of Standard English*, John Fisher describes how a standard **may** have arisen at the court in London. (*my emphasis*)
>
> van Gelderen 2006: 15

> Chancery English **may** be the beginning of a written standard, one that does not necessarily represent spoken English. (*my emphasis*)
>
> van Gelderen 2006: 16

This shall be discussed further in sections 5.3.12., 6.3. and 6.4.

Van Gelderen states in her text that "[t]here is a lot of variation within the writings of one scribe as well as between different scribes from the same area" (2006: 15), yet does not state where this variation comes from. She does cite Smith (1996), Hope (2000) and Wright (2000), however, to establish that migration into London might have been crucial (van Gelderen 2006: 16). Van Gelderen concludes that the preeminent variation did not hinder standardisation, but gives a rather questionable reason:

> Despite the variation, a standard was established since scribes often copied earlier manuscripts and many indeed copied the symbols indicative of an earlier pronunciation.
>
> 2006: 15

Looking at this quotation in connection with the one about spelling conventions above, the question again presents itself which aspect of Chancery Standard was supposedly standardised if it was not spelling. How standardisation is then

achieved through the mere copying of earlier manuscripts (which by all accounts showed a great deal of variation in spelling), rather than the adaptation of these manuscripts into a modernised spelling, is not made clear.

5.1.2. London Standard

The remaining six texts which have not been discussed so far argue for a theory which I will call *London Standard*. While the former category featured two sets of three texts each which were temporally far apart, the same makeup cannot be found in this category. The first publication of the oldest text, Baugh and Cables *A History of the English Language* (1951) significantly pre-dates the oldest text in the Chancery Standard category, Strang's *A History of English* (1970). Even the second oldest text under investigation, Algeo and Pyles' *The Origins and Development of the English Language* (1964) pre-dates the Strang text. Indeed, three of the four remaining texts were also first published before the year 2000: McLaughlin *Aspects of the History of English* (1970), Leith's *A social history of English* (1983) and Freeborn's *From Old English to Standard English* (1992). The only text whose first edition was published fairly recently is Brinton and Arnovick (2006). Yet the two oldest texts in this category, Baugh and Cable (1951) and Algeo and Pyles (1964), are widely read and so popular that they are now both available in their fifth edition (2002 and 2004 respectively).

5.1.2.1. Baugh and Cable (1951)

Upon the first examination of the Baugh and Cable (2002) text it becomes apparent that the authors argue for the predecessor of Modern Standard English to have developed from a London variety, as one of the sub-chapters in the relevant section is titled "***The Spread of London Standard***" (2002: 194). As we have seen above, however, this is no guarantee for the argument to actually be in favour of a London-based variety different from that of Westminster Chancery English, as some writers used either of the two terms to refer to Chancery Standard. That this text indeed does not argue along these lines is made clear in the text:

> This influence emanating from London can be seen in the variety of English used in documents of the national bureaucracy as written by the clerks of Chancery.
>
> 2002: 195

The argument here runs opposite that of the rationalisations used in the previous section, as the English found in Chancery documents is explained to be a result of the influence London had on the standard language. In fact, the point had been made quite clear in the text already previously to this point:

> Out of this variety of local dialects there emerged toward the end of the fourteenth century a written language that in the course of the fifteenth won general recognition and has since become the recognized standard both in speech and writing. The part of England that contributed most to the formation of this standard was the East Midland district, and it was the East Midland type of English that became its basis, particularly the dialect of the metropolis, London. Several causes contributed to the attainment of this result.
>
> 2002: 192

If "particularly the dialect of the metropolis, London" was left out, this text could have been found in any of the texts arguing for Chancery Standard. While the overall theory is different, the basic facts remain mostly the same, that is that Modern Standard English is ultimately derived from an East Midland type of English. While Baugh and Cable also explain the variation found in London English with the influx of immigrants from the Midlands in the relevant period, they additionally give linguistic reasons for this particular kind of English being favoured (see section 5.2.6. for detail). After having given different reasons which all contributed to the selection of a certain London dialect (see section 5.2. for detail), Baugh and Cable come to an interesting conclusion:

> By far the most influential factor in the rise of Standard English was the importance of London as the capital of England. Indeed, it is altogether likely that the language of the city would have become the prevailing dialect without the help of any of the factors previously discussed. In doing so it would have been following the course of other national

> tongues - French as the dialect of Paris, Spanish as that of Castile, and others.
>
> 2002: 194

Indeed, one might wonder how they can attribute any influence to the factors they previously discussed if they then conclude that they might not have been needed at all. Of course, a variety of reasons where one weighs more that others is not only possible, but does seem likely.

What is interesting, however, is that Baugh and Cable talk of London English as a regional dialect and state that "[t]he history of Standard English is almost a history of London English." Yet it is important to note that the recent history of London English always has to be viewed with attention to the different class dialects, of which Cockney is but one. It seems altogether unlikely that in a metropolitan centre like London there should only have been one dialect used by all classes alike. This point will be discussed in greater detail in section 5.1.2.4., as Leith discusses it in his text.

While many of the texts arguing for Chancery Standard quote Samuels or base their assumptions on his theories, Baugh and Cable do not quote him at all. This is easily explained for the first edition as it was in fact published before Samuels' article on the topic (1963), yet it is interesting that Baugh and Cable have not revised their chapter on the topic at all to include any allusion to Samuels. Of course, Baugh and Cable argue for something quite different than Samuels and do not directly discuss the influence of the Chancery.

5.1.2.2. Algeo and Pyles (1964)

Algeo and Pyles' account of the emergence of a standardised variety of English is one of these cases where it is not quite clear how it should be classified. While they consistently say that London English eventually became a standard, they do cite Fisher's theory on Chancery Standard, yet neither endorse it, nor dismiss it:

> The standardization of the language was due in first place to the need of the central government for regular procedures by which to conduct its business, to keep its records, and to communicate with the citizens of the land. [...]
>
> Standard languages are often by-products of bureaucracy, developed to meet a specific administrative need, as prosaic as such a source is, rather than spontaneous developments of the folk of the artifice of writers and scholars. John H. Fisher has argued that standard English was first the language of the Court of Chancery, founded in the fifteenth century to give prompt justice to English citizens and to consolidate the king's influence in the nation.
>
> Algeo and Pyles 2004: 173

From this it does not become quite clear whether the "need of the central government" (ibid.) was influential in developing the standard or merely utilised one for its purposes which was already available in London.

While Baugh and Cable make a difference between the English found in official documents in London and the language of Chaucer, saying that "it is the language found in such documents rather than the language of Chaucer that is at the basis of Standard English" (2002: 193) as the language used by Chaucer is in fact not identical with that of said documents, Algeo and Pyles paint a different picture:

> [...] and John Gower and Geoffrey Chaucer wrote in the East Midland dialect, specifically the London variety of East Midland. Standard Modern English - both American and British - is a development of the speech of London.
>
> 2004: 131

When considering these statements in terms of Samuels' theory, it seems that Baugh and Cable argue for a difference between *Types II* and *III*, asserting that it was, in fact, a *Type II* standard which ultimately became the standard, while Algeo and Pyles combine both types, or at least completely disregard *Type II* in their arguments.

Despite their allusion to Fisher's theory on Chancery Standard I would argue that this text has rightly been put in this category, as the overall text always speaks of

London English and indeed gives many justifications for London rather than Chancery English.

5.1.2.3. McLaughlin (1970)

Rather at the end of his section on the emergence of a standard English, McLaughlin sums up his previous arguments in a concise statement:

> Greater social mobility, increased facility of communication, higher literacy rates, wider interest in reading and in formal education, and concern for elegant expression - all these lead toward the standardization of language patterns.
>
> McLaughlin 1970: 57

These arguments are already by themselves highly interesting. McLaughlin paints the picture of a changed society: a society which was previously less interested in reading, education and communication developing an interest in all these. Thus, McLaughlin puts strong emphasis on the social reasons leading to standardisation, rather than the political reasons given before. In the rest of the section he devoted to the reconstruction of the supposed emergence of a standard English which precedes the quote, he in fact does give the established political and economic reasons:

> Further, the seat of government, the abode of the kings of England, was in the southeast - in London. Here was the social, political and commercial center of the land, and to it flocked not only Englishmen from the southern, western, and northern provinces, but courtiers, diplomats, artists, scholars, and teachers from all over the known world. As one might expect, the London dialect became a prestige dialect. [...]
>
> Of greater importance to the development of standard English were the court documents, official records, and nonliterary papers of men of affairs.
>
> 1970: 57

There are several remarks to be made about above abstract. Similar to the way Baugh and Cable claim that the variety spoken in London was a regional rather

than a class dialect, McLaughlin alleges the dialect of London to have had prestige. While it might be true that a certain kind of English which could be found in London might have had prestige, perhaps that of the court, of writers or of the bourgeoisie, it does not quite warrant above statement. When regarding the language situations of modern capitals like London, Paris or Vienna, it seems unlikely that the biggest part of the population of London did speak this supposedly prestigious dialect, so referring to it as the dialect of London is quite misleading. It is furthermore not made clear in what timeframe this variety supposedly gained prestige. While it seems reasonable to think that it would be a prestige dialect or variety which would be selected for standardisation, the argument could just as easily be made the other way round. That is to say that a certain variety gained prestige because it was standardised.

Additionally, it is interesting how McLaughlin ascribes great importance to court documents and official records, yet not to the institutions publishing them. Consequently, it is not quite clear what relation there was supposed to have been between the promotion of a certain variety and official documents. It almost seems as if McLaughlin ascribes standardising power to the documents themselves, similar to how many other authors have ascribed great influence to the beginning of printing in the British Isles (see 5.2.2.).[16]

5.1.2.4. Leith (1983)

The first thing one might notice when regarding Leith is that he contributed to two texts in the present study: *Changing English* (Graddol et al. 2008), as well as his own monograph *A social history of English* (1983). Interestingly enough, the first of these two has been characterised as arguing for Chancery Standard, while the latter falls into the London Standard category. Indeed, while there are some

[16] While such a reading might at first seem like an over-interpretation, I think it is important to distinguish between what an author has written, and what he might have meant thereby. We saw a similar situation in 5.1.1.5., where McIntyre's wording (2009: 20) made it sound like he was referring to all varieties of Present Day English, rather than just the standard or English English. While a reader can always interpret a writer's statement in a way in which it makes the most sense to them, it is important in such an analysis as this not to exclude alternative readings, especially if these are the ones most logically following from what an author actually wrote.

similarities between the two, there are some very significant differences. It might be that Leith changed his mind between the last edition of his monograph (1997) and the first edition of *Changing English* (2008). It might also be, however, that because he was working with a team he was persuaded to accept a different account, even if this was in fact not the one he favoured personally. It might also be that to him, the distinction is not as clear cut as I have here interpreted it to be.

As might be expected from a book titled *A **social** history of English* (*my emphasis*), the focus lies mainly on language external circumstances and how they contributed to the history of the language. While all other texts under investigation here also focus mostly on language external reasons for the emergence of a standard variety, Leith goes much more into detail and takes care to describe the context carefully. Nonetheless, Leith's text seems much more critical of established norms of historical linguistic textbooks and often challenges them, for example when drawing attention to the fact that "many [speakers] have been led to believe that the so-called standard variety is the language itself" (1997: 33), thus arguing along similar lines as this thesis.

One of the most striking similarities between the two texts written by Leith is that both follow Haugen's taxonomy in explaining the process of standardisation. It is noteworthy, however, that while Graddol et al. (2007) follows the sequence established by Haugen (1966), Leith re-orders them slightly, putting *acceptance* in the second rather than the fourth position (1997: 31).

Leith's explanation as to where and how the standard originated are quite different from the account given in Graddol et al. (2007).

> The origins of the dominant variety of English - on which notions of the standard were subsequently built - lie with the merchant class based in London.
>
> The dialect they spoke was the East Midland one - associated first with Norfolk, later with Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire - and already by the fourteenth century this was a class dialect in

> London. The lower class spoke another dialect, a south-eastern one, the antecedent of Cockney.
>
> Leith 1997: 39

This account is much in accordance with Wright (1992: 112; 1996), and has actually not been discussed by Samuels at all. While some of the other texts under investigation here claim that merchants and trade had some influence of the establishment of a standard, Leith actually goes a step further and asserts that Standard English had its beginnings with the merchant classes in London. The variation found in this developing standard is still ascribed to immigration, and the variety used in London is described as being East Midland in character.

Interestingly, Leith subsequently does employ a Samuelsian discourse, as he talks about different written standards, the date 1430 and the secular scriptoria:

> By the end of the fourteenth century, East Midland can be seen as an embryonic written standard. Within the dialect, however, there were variations, often associated with the birthplaces of bourgeois immigrants into London; so at first we see in use a number of different written standards. After about 1430, however, one of these variants became increasingly dominant, its use in government and official documents aided by the newly-established secular scriptoria mentioned above. By the end of that century, the fixing of the selected variety was greatly strengthened, and accelerated, by the printing press.
>
> 1997: 39

Rather than intimating that this newly established written standard was formed through and by the Chancery, Leith only states that the use of this standard was *aided* through the Chancery conventions of using this standard. In this way, Leith uses the discourse formed by Samuels, and therefore the same information and data, yet constructs it in favour of the theory he endorses. Note, also, that Leith ascribes the fixing of the standard at least in part to printing, where the wording of many other writers suggests that printing had an influence on the *selection* of the standard. This confusion perhaps arises from Caxton himself who, when starting

his printing business in Kent, was unsure which variety of English to use, not knowing that a tentative standard already existed:

> By about the middle of the fifteenth century, the East Midland dialect had been accepted as a written norm by those who wrote official documents. But its acceptance was rather tacit than explicit, a matter of conventions rather than *diktat*. For then Caxton - who had spent much of his life on the continent - came to set up his press, he did not realise that the variety he was printing was already a written norm. Instead, he complained about the difficulty choosing a dialect that all could understand, and also - like a good many people since - about how English had changed since he was young.
>
> 1997: 41

5.1.2.5 Freeborn (1992)

Freeborn's *From Old English to Standard English* is peculiar in a number of ways. Firstly, none of the other texts states so clearly that what will be dealt with in the book will be the history of English as a standard language only. Secondly, Freeborn argues for different theories at different points in his book without relating each to the other, and thirdly his is the only account that refers to London English repeatedly as being *Southern*, rather than *Midland* in character:

> The recommended dialect (London dialect) was therefore Southern, not Northern or Western: [...]
>
> This defines the literary language already in use in the 16th century, and clearly describes it as the prestigious language of the educated classes of London and the south-east. London was the centre of government, trade and commerce, and so the language of the 'dominant forces' in society would carry prestige, and others would seek to copy it.
>
> This is a simplified explanation of a complex state of affairs, but it helps to explain why the educated London dialect formed the basis of the standard language as it developed.
>
> Freeborn 1998: 225

Just one paragraph later, however, Freeborn essentially contradicts himself in saying that

> The London dialect in the later 14th century derived from a mixture of ME dialects, but was strongly influenced by the East Midlands dialect in particular. London naturally attracted large numbers of men and women and their families from other areas of the country to find work, bringing their own dialectal speech with them. Historians have identified a considerable migration of people from the East Midlands to London from the late 13th century to the mid-14th century, some of whom must have become the 'dominant social class' whose language carried prestige and was imitated by others. But because people migrated into London from other parts of the country also, there are features of Southern and Kentish also in the London dialect.
>
> 1998: 225

While in the first extract quoted, Freeborn states that the variety spoken in London is Southern, in the second extract he states quite clearly that it is in fact "derived from a mixture of M[iddle]E[nglish] dialects", particularly those form the East Midlands. While it might at first glance seem that his argumentation is somewhat different from the other texts, it becomes apparent that he does indeed refer to the same phenomenon the other texts described.

The passages above are interesting on another account as well: like many other texts, the passages also invoke the elusive concept of prestige. Note that prestige is once again invoked to be self-evident, as Freeborn explains that the language of the presumed elite should carry prestige. While this might at first glance seem rather logical and plausible, when considering the matter further, certain problems arise, which will be discussed in 5.2.5.

While the account given so far seems to be indicative of a London Standard, some mere two chapters after the passage quoted above Freeborn provides a second explanation for the origin of Standard English:

> In the 15th century, the City of Westminster, two miles distant and separate from London, had been the centre of government administration since the second half of the 12th century. The Chancery (originally *chancelery*) was the Court of the Lord Chancellor, and the written English that developed there in the 15th century was to become a standard, both in its style of handwriting ('Chancery hand') and in its

> vocabulary and grammar, because the use of English in administrative documents, rather than French, was re-established after about 1430.
>
> Freeborn 1998: 247

As this account clearly argues for Chancery Standard, the question arises why it has been put into this category rather than the previous. The answer is quite simple. While Freeborn seems to assert that Modern Standard English had its roots somehow in the English used at the Chancery, he also states clearly that "the educated London dialect formed the basis of the standard language as it developed." (1998: 225) When regarding this statement together with the chronology presented by Freeborn we can come to the conclusion that he makes some connection between the London dialect of the fourteenth century (heavily influenced by the East Midlands dialects) and the fifteenth century "written English" of the Chancery. It might be that Freeborn ascribes a similar regulating function to the Chancery clerks that Leith ascribed to Caxton: that of further fixing a variety which had already been established in one way or another.

At this point it is also interesting to note the continuing occurrence of the year 1430: while Strang writes that Type IV or Chancery Standard "dominated from about 1430" (1991: 1430), which is supported by van Gelderen (2006: 15), Freeborn only fixes the establishment of English instead of Latin and French as the language of written documents to that date. This is also in accordance with Scragg's account, as he writes that "[t]he adoption of English as the language of official documents by chancery scribes about 1430 gave scriveners an authoritative standard" (Scragg 1975: 64).

5.1.2.6. Brinton and Arnovick (2006)

The categorisation of Brinton and Arnovick's *The English Language. A Linguistic History* (2006), the most recent text in this category, is again very straightforward. The text consistently argues for a London based standard, yet not for a London dialect, but rather for different dialects being mixed together in London from

which the standard ultimately originated. While this might be a reasonable position to hold, the actual wording is quite peculiar:

> A growing urban population, the result of migrations of speakers of different dialects into urban centers, especially London, **made it necessary** for people from different parts of the country to communicate easily. (*my emphasis*)
>
> Brinton and Arnovick 2006: 299

Where other writers were content to say that people migrated to London and it so happened that rather than adapting to the London dialect there presumably was accommodation on both sides, thus creating a new dialect, Brinton and Arnovick claim that the fact that people from different dialect regions lived closely together first made easy communication necessary. This almost makes it sound as if before it had not been necessary for people supposedly speaking the same language to communicate with each other easily. This in turn raises the question how trade was supposed to have functioned at all. Above statement furthermore implies that this development was not unique to London, but in fact must have happened in all urban centres.

The influences named are largely those already established in the other texts. Indeed, from the eight (sets of) arguments listed in table 2, Brinton and Arnovick give seven, which is the most any text gives. The only popularly quoted reason omitted is, remarkably enough, the *administration/Chancery* argument. As a matter of fact, the Chancery is only named briefly, and by no means as a contributing force:

> More recently, two assumptions made by Samuels have been called into question, namely that the standard developed out of a prestige dialect (the Chancery standard) and that it was centered in London. Many scholars now believe that the influence of the merchant or middle class may have been underestimated as well as that of more northerly dialects which accompanied migrants into the capital city.
>
> 2006: 301

While it may be true that many scholars assert that the "the influence of the merchant or middle class may have been underestimated", this rather limited study already shows that many texts (Brinton and Arnovick 2006, Leith 1983 or McIntyre 2009) do in fact address the influence of the middle class on the formation of the standard, particularly that part of the middle class presumed to have immigrated to London from the Midlands in the fourteenth century. Regarding the remark that the established view that the newly developing standard was centred in London is challenged we find that as yet no textbook (at least none that I found) completely disregarded the importance of London. It is true, however, that compared to a hundred years ago, when the supposedly unadulterated London dialect was believed to be the origin of Modern Standard English, more recent and modern accounts stress the importance of the Midlands and hardly mention the linguistic influence of the original (pre-immigration) London dialect at all.

5.2. Many reasons - one result

5.2.1. Influence of administration and the Chancery

It is not surprising that only those texts in the *London Standard* category should mention the *influence* of the Chancery, as the other texts do not treat it as mere influence, but credit the Chancery with the *creation* of the standard. One might, of course, argue that this is also a kind of influence, but for the sake of the discussion, those six accounts in favour of a Chancery Standard theory have been omitted here. They have, of course, been duly discussed in section 5.1.1. Of the remaining six texts, four directly or indirectly credit the Chancery with some influence, while the remaining two also mention it in some way: Baugh and Cable (2002) take the fact that a standardised spelling was used by the Chancery clerks to be indicative of the importance of the London Standard (2002: 195), while Brinton and Arnovick (2006: 301) merely mention that lately, Samuels' assertion that Chancery Standard is the predecessor of Modern Standard English has been called into question by some scholars (which, of course, is evident in this study).

Algeo and Pyles' (2004) allusion to the administrative apparatus, especially in form of the Chancery, can be interpreted as an endorsement of this particular theory; though, as I have argued in the relevant section on the text, due to the wording of the paragraph it can not be said with absolute certainty whether referring to Fisher is used to support their own theory, to support Fisher's theory or merely to represent more than one argument. The language used to refer to Fisher's theory is rather neutral, which complicates the matter further. The fact remains that while Algeo and Pyles argue for London to have been the origin of Modern Standard English, they also stress the importance of the needs of administration:

> The standardization of the language was due in first place to the need of the central government for regular procedures by which to conduct its business, to keep its records, and to communicate with the citizens of the land.
>
> 2004: 173

This statement invokes the theory of Haugen (1966), as he argued that standardisation is a by-product of the forming and development of nation states. Some have taken this to mean that a standard was created due to the people's need to identify with one single variety in order to stress the unity of a people formerly divided. This is the argument underlying Brinton and Arnovick's statement that "[a] sense of English patriotism following victories in the Hundred Years War also encouraged a national language" (2006: 299). Many others, and indeed most of those endorsing the Chancery Standard theory, argue along the lines of Algeo and Pyles.

Leith, for instance, who is quite clearly in favour of a London Standard, does invoke the discourse established by Samuels, as he talks of "a number of different written standards", of which one becomes "increasingly dominant" after 1430 (Leith 1997: 39). This, he deems, is much aided by the use of the newly established standard in official documents. Leith also dedicates an entire sub-chapter titled "The Scribal Tradition" to discussing the influence scribes might have had on the regularisation of spelling.

Rather than ascribing importance to the Chancery clerks or the scribes of the day, McLaughlin emphasises the importance of the written word itself:

> Of greater importance to the development of standard English [than the poetic writings of Chaucer] were the court documents, official records, and nonliterary papers of men of affairs.
>
> McLaughlin 1970: 57

While it might seem peculiar that McLaughlin should attribute a standardising force to the documents themselves rather than to those producing them, it might be easily explained when considering that the scribes probably did not go out onto the street to teach people the correct Chancery spellings of words. Rather, those of the public who were able to read would have picked up on regularities in the documents themselves and might have sought to comply.

Freeborn, like Algeo and Pyles, does not seem to really use his allusion to the Chancery as an argument in favour of his theory, as he also simply states some facts about it without further qualification or connection to what he previously said on the subject:

> In the 15th century, the City of Westminster, two miles distant and separate from London, had been the centre of government administration since the second half of the 12th century. The Chancery (originally *chancelery*) was the Court of the Lord Chancellor, and the written English that developed there in the 15th century was to become a standard, both in its style of handwriting ('Chancery hand') and in its vocabulary and grammar, because the use of English in administrative documents, rather than French, was re-established after about 1430.
>
> Freeborn 1998: 247

The exact wording of this extract at one point seems rather peculiar, that is where Freeborn implies that the variety used at the Chancery became a standard *because* English replaced French as the language for official documents. While I have argued above that this elaboration of function was certainly a prerequisite for the later development of a standard, this cause and effect relationship is rather askew. Note, however, how Freeborn refers to the handwriting, grammar and vocabulary used by the Chancery scribes, yet does not mention the spelling, which is the only thing mentioned by the other texts, if anything is mentioned at all. Yet whether they mention it explicitly or not, it is the spelling which most texts agree on to have been regularised in this period, much more than the vocabulary or the grammar.

5.2.2. Influence of Caxton and printing

All texts under investigation here mention William Caxton or printing in connection to standardisation. While in some texts the mention is rather offhand and not particularly prominent, others focus strongly on the role played by printing and/or Caxton. All of the texts point out the significant role printing played in the formation of a standard, yet only two texts mention that the relationship between the standard and printing has not always been

unambiguous. Here, only those two accounts, as well as two interesting accounts not mentioning this ambiguity will be examined in greater detail. As the remaining texts essentially contain the same arguments and the same information, I do not deem it necessary to reproduce all relevant passages and to comment on each one separately.

When Caxton returned from continental Europe and set up a press in Westminster he was faced with the dialect diversity in England and the problems this might pose to him as a printer. The texts which do describe this problem all agree that while Caxton complained that it was incredibly difficult for him to choose one variety to use in printing (Caxton in the foreword to *Eneydos* in Freeborn 1998: 261), which was of utmost importance if he wanted his prints to be widely understood, he need not have worried so much. In fact, many argue that Caxton used the newly established standard without being aware that it was in fact already widely accepted.

As mentioned above, there are generally two ways the texts deal with the influence of printing: the great majority in one way or another proclaims the importance of printing, some giving details about Caxton and quoting one or two passages he wrote as forewords to publications. Two of the texts, on the other hand, point out the ambiguous relationship that will be explored below. Of those two, McIntyre (2009) only gives a brief mention, while Blake (1996) considers it in greater detail.

McIntyre begins with a general statement that "[a] key date in the development of a standard form of English is 1476" (McIntyre 2009: 22), a date firmly established as the advent of printing in England. While he does attribute great importance to this event (dedicating a whole subchapter to "Caxton and the impact of the printing press"), he mentions the ambivalence of the relationship between printing and standardisation:

> However, standardising the language was not a primary concern of Caxton's. Rather it was a by-product of a number of decisions that

> Caxton and his fellow printers [...] had to make as they typeset manuscripts to copy. The process of standardisation was lengthy and cannot be attributed to Caxton alone. Indeed, some scholars (e.g. Scragg 1974: 64) have pointed out that, initially, printing actually caused problems for the establishment of consistency in written English.
>
> McIntyre 2009: 22

McIntyre does not say much more about this issue, but rather reverts to explaining in what way the printing press eventually did further the spread of an emerging standard. To make this point a bit clearer, it is advisable to look at the reference McIntyre referred to:

> But whereas the spread of this spelling consistency might have been expected to be helped by William Caxton's setting up of the first English press at the sign of the Red Pale in Westminster in 1476, initially printing proved only a hindrance in the move towards orthographic uniformity. [...] But this would depend on the printer using a house-style comparable with that of the manuscript shops, whereas in fact the spelling of most early printed books is very irregular. Rather than further the stabilising movement of the professional scribes, the printers in effect encouraged lack of conformity in spelling.
>
> Scragg 1975: 64

Note how both texts use the word *initially* to indicate that what they are describing is not a static situation, but one that changed over time. While they attest that at first printing hindered standardisation rather than promoting it, they do not question that, after some initial difficulties, printing did much to regularise English spelling, and later, perhaps, grammar.

The reason Scragg gives for this "lack of conformity in spelling" (1975: 64) is somewhat reminiscent of the explanations given by many scholars for the variation in spelling in many Middle English documents and manuscripts: the incompetent scribe. Scragg, of course, refers to compositors rather than scribes[17], but the argument stays the same: conformity of spelling could not be

[17] *Scribes* being people who copied a manuscript by hand, whereas *compositors* typeset a manuscript on a printing press.

accomplished because those responsible for typesetting were not sufficiently acquainted with the language. While Milroy (1999: 29) argues that such reasoning lacks evidence and credibility when used to explain variation in spelling in written manuscripts, there is some evidence that points to its possibility at least: as William Caxton was the first to set up a printing press in England, he was probably not immediately able to employ Englishmen as compositors, simply because they were not yet acquainted with the new machinery. Indeed, Caxton's successor Wynkyn de Worde, who was the first to set up his printing press in Fleet Street - today synonymous with publishing and printing -, was originally from Alsace. Scragg explains the changing situation by asserting that as time progressed, many of those who had previously trained to become a scribe then took up the profession of compositors, thus introducing the emerging written standard to printing. (1975: 66)

This line of argumentation is also echoed by Blake (1996: 204-205), who explains in great detail how printing hindered standardisation initially, only shortly referring to how it finally became one of standardisation's greatest aides. While Blake also refers to the foreign compositor as the root of variation, he additionally explains that the conventions of printing also favoured variation in spelling: in order to achieve full justification of a document, compositors are said to have used different spellings depending on the word length they required. Blake (1996: 205) gives the spellings *top*, *topp* and *toppe* as examples for this phenomenon. He does not, however, discuss whether such intentional variation is indicative of some awareness of the language in question, and thus, therefore, perhaps points to an English native speaker rather than a foreigner, or if to a foreigner, then one very well acquainted with the English language and its spelling conventions.

One issue that is not thoroughly explained is the relationship between the dialects in which the authors wrote a manuscript by hand, and the form in which it was ultimately published. Thus it does not become quite clear if some time after the establishment of printing in England manuscripts were still submitted in various

dialects and then regularised by the printers, or whether authors became more and more aware of the emerging standard and actually started writing in the standard.

On the other hand, the strongest case for the immediate influence of printing on the development of a new standard comes from van Gelderen, who makes a quite bold claim:

> A major boost to the standard comes after the introduction of the printing press in 1476. William Caxton introduced the printing press in London, physically close to the Chancery, even though he himself came from Kent and had spent much time abroad. Standardization is **automatically established** when a document, book, or pamphlet is reproduced the same way many times. Caxton relied on the writing of scribes rather than inventing a new system and was not interested in standardizing spelling himself. (*my emphasis*)
>
> van Gelderen 2006: 16

Van Gelderen first speaks of a "boost" to the development of the standard, which she herself has argued to have originated in the Chancery, thus using the argument in the established way. Her next statement is all the more significant, as she argues for an *automatic establishment*, which indicates that it would have occurred even without the previous efforts of the Chancery. As van Gelderen quite clearly does not argue for an automatic standardisation of English through the advent of printing, it is peculiar that she should make such a statement.[18]

Most of the accounts indeed only credit printing with the spread of an already *selected* standard, as they ascribe printing to the stage of *codification*. As the first grammar books and the first dictionaries were only to appear much later, printing

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[18] While this is clearly not what van Gelderen is arguing, it seems interesting to me to pursue this line of though a bit further: it would be stimulating to know whether this automatic process would only happen when regularised printing is introduced to a language or variety not previously standardised, or whether it would also have the same effect on already fixed systems. That is to say, if every printer/publisher started spelling certain words in a way different to how they are conventionally spelled today, would the public automatically accept the new spelling as correct? Would it depend on the number of printers/publishers or their influence? In this special case the matter is simplified significantly as Caxton was the first printer and could therefore use his own conventions. It would be interesting to hear van Gelderen's idea on what would have happened had Caxton, unwittingly, chosen a variety radically different from that presumably already introduced by the Chancery.

was an important tool to codify or fix the language in a certain state. It is important to remember that while some texts claim that printing (as well as other factors) led to the establishment of a standard English, this does not stand in contradiction with what they have said before. While not many use these terms, it seems that most would argue for printing to contribute significantly to the *codification* of language, while only a few discuss it in terms of *selection*.

Leith, for example, does not cite printing as a driving force in the codification stage, but rather as being introduced to England after a first fixing of the standard:

> By about the middle of the fifteenth century, the East Midland dialect had been accepted as a written norm by those who wrote official documents. But its acceptance was rather tacit than explicit, a matter of conventions rather than *diktat*. For when Caxton - who had spent much of his life on the continent - came to set up his press, he did not realise that the variety he was printing was already a written norm.
>
> Leith 1997: 41

As Leith also interprets Caxton's comments in various forewords to his prints to mean that Caxton was largely unaware that the variety he was printing had already been established to some extent among those in the South-East Midlands who could write, it seems rather puzzling that Caxton should have selected exactly this variety. While it is no longer possible to ascertain with any precision why he should have done so, we might be inclined to infer that the mere proximity of the Chancery might have influenced his decision.

In addition to the influence printing supposedly had on standardisation already discussed, there is another aspect which is not mentioned in the sections of the text under investigation here, but which I find it nonetheless important to mention: while up to the fifteenth century there was only a small number of people who could read and write, the greater availability of texts led to greater literacy, which in turn ensured that there was a corpus of people who could learn and adopt standardised spelling and grammar. It therefore seems to me fully justified that so

many of the texts should attribute great importance to the establishment of printing in England.

5.2.3. Influence of merchants and trade

As already related in 3.3., Laura Wright (1992) assessed that traditional accounts of the emergence of a standard English generally followed two patterns, where one was superficial and mentioned prestige as well as the London - Oxford - Cambridge triangle, and the other claimed Chancery Standard to be the precursor of Modern Standard English. Wright, on the other hand, argues strongly for a greater influence of the merchant class than has previously been described.

Only three of the texts really mention the merchant class as having had a direct influence on the emergence of a standard English. Two of those, Brinton and Arnovick (2006) and McIntyre (2009) claim the merchant class to have been instrumental in the spread of a previously established embryonic standard. In McIntyre, this is Chancery Standard, while in Brinton and Arnovick it is a London Standard which was supposedly spread by the merchant class. Only Leith (1997) sees the merchant class at the heart of the developing standard. Interestingly enough, the latter predates Wright's statement quoted above. It is not surprising, however, that the one text who does argue along these lines is the one with the greatest focus on social parameters rather than linguistic ones, as it strongly emphasises the external factors contributing to language change. The case made for the influence of the merchant class is straightforward and in itself coherent:

> The origins of the dominant variety of English - on which notions of the standard were subsequently built - lie with the merchant class based in London. [...]
>
> The dialect they spoke was the East Midland one - associated first with Norfolk, later with Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire - and already by the fourteenth century this was a class dialect in London. [...]
>
> By the end of the fourteenth century, East Midland can be seen as an embryonic written standard. Within the dialect, however, there were variations, often associated with the birthplaces of bourgeois

> immigrants into London; so at first we see in use a number of different written standards. After about 1430, however, one of these variants became increasingly dominant, its use in government and official documents aided by the newly-established secular scriptoria mentioned above. By the end of that century, the fixing of the selected variety was greatly strengthened, and accelerated, by the printing press.
>
> Leith 1997: 39

The linguistic variation to be found in the embryonic standard of the fifteenth century is explained through the different dialectal backgrounds of the speakers who made up the class of merchants, who are here named as the origin of said standard. It is also significant that Leith points out that at this stage in its development, the dialect of the merchant class already is a class dialect rather than a regional one and is not at all synonymous with the dialect spoken by the original Londoners. Note, also, how Leith includes the Chancery argument into his reasonings, yet rather than ascribing standardising power to the Chancery in the way many other authors have done, credits it with supporting the use of the new standard in official documents only. In this line of argumentation, the Chancery is described as indeed being influential in spreading a newly developing standard, yet a variety which had not been conceived by its scribes and clerks.

McIntyre's account of the standardising power of the merchant class reads quite similar to Leith's account, though he seemingly argues for something quite different (see 5.1.1.5). Therefore it seems highly interesting that part of the account given by McIntyre can be read to support Leith's assertions:

> The rise of the so-called Chancery English has much to do with the power and wealth of the merchant classes trading in London at the time, whose dialect it was.
>
> McIntyre 2009: 22

It is not completely clear from the text in what relation exactly the Chancery and the merchant class of London stood. The argument for Samuels' account of Chancery English would support the theory that the embryonic standard was

developed by the Chancery clerks and subsequently spread to the city. In what way the written language of a few government officials can be believed to influence the speech of a large group of people remains an unanswered question. Thus, if the assertion is true that the speech of the London middle class was congruent with the variety used by the Chancery clerks, Leith's interpretation seems altogether much more likely: that a new dialect should form in a situation of increased contact between people of different dialect backgrounds and subsequently be utilised by the Chancery due to its currency in the city and national trade.

5.2.4. Influence of education and universities

Wright asserts that those historical linguistics textbooks which treat the emergence of a standard English only very briefly generally "invoke a triangle of London, Oxford and Cambridge as the seats of power and learning" (1992: 110) yet do not explain the importance in great detail. Of the twelve texts only four discuss the importance of the universities in Oxford and Cambridge. The individual significance of these institutions varies already in this small sample, however. Generally speaking, the reference to the universities is used in some way to support the argument that the new standard is East Midland in character, either because of the universities or as evidenced by them.

Interestingly, two of the accounts are directly opposite: while Baugh and Cable assert that "the dialect of Oxford had no apparent influence on the form of London English" (2002: 194), Brinton and Arnovick claim that "Oxford was more central and Cambridge was rather isolated" (2006: 299). Yet while Baugh and Cable talk about the linguistic influence the dialect of Oxford might have had on that of London, Brinton and Arnovick allude to the prestige that these institutions might have lent to the new standard. The same lines of argumentation are also found in the remaining two texts discussing the importance of the universities: while Leith (1997: 39) ascribes a lingua franca function to the East Midland dialect in the

London-Oxford-Cambridge triangle, McLaughlin (1970: 57) invokes the notion of prestige provided by these authoritative institutions.

Of the four texts, only McLaughlin (1970) seems to fit the pattern described by Wright (in this respect). It might well be that this line of argumentation was found in only a third of the texts because the influence of the universities is so hard to assess, which is evidenced by the comparatively large variation in the accounts.

5.2.5. Influence of social and political elite and the concept of prestige

The most frequently used argument given for the selection of a particular variety to become standardised over others is the elusive category of prestige. All of the texts mention prestige in one way or another, some using it to justify the position Standard English has in the world today, some to explain why a particular variety came to be standardised in the first place. In many of the texts prestige is not directly mentioned as the driving force, but it is strongly alluded to through the concept of social power.

Apart from frequently being cited as a driving force behind standardisation, *prestige* is also often referred to in the definitions of what Standard English is. As such it is often a rather circular argument: the standard is standard because it has prestige, and is prestigious because it is the standard. Algeo and Pyles link prestige inevitably to the concept of standard language and assert that this prestigious form of language is perceived as "'good' language" by the elusive "people" (Algeo and Pyles 2004: 217). Statements of this kind disregard the changing patterns of power in connection with standard languages, of which the changing role of the supposedly prestigious accent Received Pronunciation (RP) is a good example: there seems to be a consensus among linguists that RP in the past carried a lot of prestige due to its association with the social and/or political elite; recently, linguists like Altendorf (2003), Fabricius (2002) and Rosewarne (1994), to mention three, have argued that the prestige of RP is diminishing. Especially at the turn of the twenty-first century, RP has had to concede its former position of social power and today is often perceived as posh, aloof and even archaic

(Fabricius 2002). The question whether this only reflects the decline in social prestige of the speakers of the variety or happens due to language internal reasons is not answered in full. It therefore seems quite problematic to link prestige and standardisation so strongly, when the relationship has not yet been fully analysed.

McIntyre boldly asserts that "power equals prestige" (2009: 22), yet like many others does not explain what kind of power he actually refers to. Modern sociolinguistics (cf. Crowley 2003, Milroy and Milroy 1985 and Fairclough 2001) has established that *power* in connection with language use can take many different forms: it can be the corrective power of a parent or teacher, the bureaucratic power of the government, the codifying power of an academy or the normative power of one's peers (as well as many more). What is most commonly meant by power in this context is the socio-economic power either of the ruling class or the merchant class.

Nonetheless, the individual accounts of the influence of prestige on the formation of a new dialect differ greatly in form. Most popular with the accounts endorsing the Chancery Standard theory is the allusion to the power of the King and his bureaucratic apparatus. The texts arguing for London Standard often refer to the power of the merchant class or the social elite centred in London. Those texts which do not mention the word *prestige* in connection to standardisation refer to social or political power in some way or another, without explaining sufficiently what they mean by the concept and in what way it can be said to influence language use generally, and standardisation specifically.

Quite frequently, matters of prestige are introduced in the text rather off-handedly and are not usually explained in great detail. Many texts make quite generalised statements like "[t]he standard is associated with prestige" (Brinton and Arnovick 2006: 301) without either explaining why this was or is so, or giving any evidence to verify their claim. An example quite stereotypical for this line of argumentation can be found in the claims frequently found in Freeborn:

> London was the centre of government, trade and commerce, and so the language of the 'dominant forces' in society would carry prestige, and others would seek to copy it.
>
> Freeborn 1998: 225

Non-sequiturs of this kind use a similar logic as outlined above by the example of Algeo and Pyles: prestige is used as the cause as well as the result of standardisation and is always self-evident.

The only text which does not argue along these lines is Leith (1997), where power is understood to be exerted consciously by an elite which cultivates a class dialect and subsequently imposes it "on an often resentful, and sometimes bewildered, populace." (Leith 1997: 33) Subsequently, Leith also stresses that "it took some time for the East Midland speech of the London merchants to acquire prestige" (1997: 39), thus establishing a linear succession where prestige follows after standardisation, whereas the accounts in the other texts always seemed to be circular.

5.2.6. Influence of language internal reasons

Despite the fact that all of the texts under investigation are historical linguistic text books, not all of them argue for there having been linguistic reasons for a certain variety to be selected over others. In fact, only four of the twelve texts make claims of that kind, while in one text the idea is refuted strongly. In all five cases, however, the argument is used in some way to explain the Midland (but also Southern and Northern) features found in the emerging standard. Yet no text uses the linguistic argument as the only justification why allegedly a Midland dialect was chosen for standardisation or why the new standard had Northern, Southern as well as Midland features. This kind of reasoning is always accompanied by an immigration argument, i.e. that a new dialect was formed in London due to (changing) immigration patterns.

The argument focused on most strongly in this discussion is that of *compromise*, that is that the Midland dialects were suitable for negotiating between the more extreme Northern and Southern dialects:

> In the first place, as Midland dialect the English of this region occupied a middle position between the extreme divergences of the north and south. It was less conservative than the Southern dialect, less radical than the Northern. In its sounds and inflections it represents a kind of compromise, sharing some of the characteristics of both its neighbors.
>
> Baugh and Cable 2002: 192

This kind of reasoning suggests that this "middle position" made the Midlands dialect suitable for communication in the merchant class not only because a large part of the London middle class was made up of merchants who had migrated to the metropolis from the Midlands, bringing their native dialects with them, but also because this dialect shared enough features both with Northern as well as Southern dialects to be understood by a large group of people.

Brinton and Arnovick argue along very similar lines, yet add another dimension to the debate: the dialect is not a direct descendant of a Midland dialect brought to London by the immigrants, it merely forms the *basis*:

> The East Midlands dialect had features which made it a suitable basis for the standard. A standard is not usually one pure regional dialect but a *compromise dialect*, widely intelligible and incorporating linguistic elements from other areas. It occupies a geographically central position and does not have extreme features, either of an innovative or a conservative kind.
>
> Brinton and Arnovick 2006: 301

Similar to Baugh and Cable (2002), this passage invokes the position of the Midlands dialect as a negotiator between more extreme Northern and Southern dialects. The central position is explicitly *geographic*, not merely linguistic, as this dialect occupies a special position on the dialect continuum. Nonetheless, at the beginning of the process of standardisation, the Midlands dialect had *incorporated*

dialectal features from other areas, thus creating an entirely new - and non-regional - dialect.

Leith's account adds yet another dimension to the debate. Embedded in his explanation of the significance of the two Universities Oxford and Cambridge and the triangle of knowledge and learning they formed together with London, he suggests that the dialect of the East Midland might have been "used as a kind of lingua franca among a mobile social group." (Leith 1997: 39) This allows the interpretation that there was sufficient language awareness in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century concerning the linguistic distance different dialects had to each other. Referring to the situation as a lingua franca situation furthermore implies that users from different dialectal backgrounds consciously switched to a different variety (here the East Midland variety) in order to facilitate communication.

Only McLaughlin's account mentions the argumentation of John of Trevisa, who argues that while Northerners and Southerners could not understand each other, Midlanders were in the position to understand and be understood by both:

> for men of þe est wiþ men of þe west, as hyt were vndur þe same party of heuene, acordeþ more in sounyng of speche þan men of þe norþ wiþ men of þe souþ. Þerfore hyt ys þat Mercii, þat buþ men of myddel Engelond, as hyt were parteners of þe endes, vnderstondeþ betre þe syde longages, Norþeron and Souþeron, þan norþeron and souþeron understondeþ eyþer oþer.
>
> Trevisa 1385

Görlach also refers to this text, yet rebukes the argumentation offered by Trevisa in saying that the Midland features of the "emerging standard language [... was] due to the massive immigration into London [...] and not because the Midland dialect is more easily understood (as implied in Trevisa's argument of ca. 1400)". Thus Görlach is the only one to categorically exclude the linguistic argument outlined above, as the remaining texts simply do not mention this line of argument, neither endorsing it nor refuting it.

5.3. Representations of the history of the English language

Another issue under investigation here is how historical linguistics textbooks represent the history of the English language. As explained in section 3.1., Milroy asserts that in the past, linguists have often represented the history in a linear way in order to create historicity for the language.

This section will investigate where the texts begin and end their discussion of English and how inclusive or exclusive[19] they are in their approach (i.e. does the discussion start with or before the settlement of the British isles by Germanic settlers; does the discussion include post-colonial varieties, and if so which; does it include non-standard varieties alongside standard varieties, etc.). To make the analysis comparable, the passages on the origin of English, the transition from Old English to Middle English and variation in Modern English have been taken into consideration.

The difference in length of the following discussions can be partly explained by the difference in the lengths of the texts themselves. However, to avoid repetition, an argument is usually only made once and subsequently referred back to. Not every discussion focuses on the same aspects, as different issues are considered in different texts. Due to the limitations of this paper, only a summarised overview of the analysis of the twelve texts is presented here.

5.3.1. Algeo and Pyles (2004)

Algeo and Pyles (2004) introduce the reader to the history of English through first asking what a language is and then proceeding to questions of sound change and the history of writing. After this, the text provides a relatively thorough introduction into "the backgrounds of English" (2004: viii), detailing the genealogy from Proto-Indo-European to Germanic. This is followed by chapters on the Old English, Middle English, Early Modern English and Late Modern English periods.

[19] *inclusive* here refers to accounts which do not focus on one variety of English exclusively but rather discuss different varieties, such as postcolonial Englishes or World Englishes; *exclusive* consequently is used to describe accounts which do have a very narrow focus, usually that of a standardised variety

The last three chapters of the book are dedicated to semantic change, the creation of new words and foreign loanwords.

Algeo and Pyles's account of the beginnings of English is somewhat complicated by their indiscriminate use of the term *English* to refer to both the language and the people speaking it:

> The recorded history of the English language begins, not on the Continent, where we know English speakers once lived, but in the British isles, where they eventually settled. During the period when the language was spoken in Europe, it is know as **pre-Old English**, for it was only after the English separated themselves from their Germanic cousins that we recognize their speech as a distinct language and begin to have records of it.
>
> Algeo and Pyles 2004: 86

In this example, we can see the historicity that is created through using the term *English*, which immediately gives the impression that the Germanic settlers of 500 AD were essentially already English. The text furthermore refers to the place where the Germanic settlers arrived as *England*, whereas it had been *Great Britain* previously (2004: 86; 88). Thus the text uses two terms which only come into general use to refer to these places much later. As we shall see, the term *British Isles* is the term most commonly used in the texts to refer to the islands.

The constructed linearity becomes once more evident in the chapter on Middle English, where Algeo and Pyles assess that the Middle English "of the earliest printed books, [...] despite certain superficial differences, is essentially the same as our own" (2004: 123). As the earliest printed books were made in the late fifteenth century, such a statement seems to disregard the Great Vowel Shift (which by most accounts had barely begun by that time), as well as other major developments in the language. Nonetheless, such an account helps to strengthen the belief in English as a language with an unbroken history, and makes it seem as if "the English" and "the English language" have essentially been the same for the last 1500 years.

When considering what was said in section 3.1. about the correlation of constructed linearity and historicity and nationalistic attitudes, the way in which Algeo and Pyles describe the Norman Conquest is not at all surprising:

> Almost at the end of the Old English period, the great catastrophe of the Norman Conquest befell the English people - a catastrophe more far-reaching in its effects on English culture than the earlier harassment by the Scandinavians.
>
> Algeo and Pyles 2004: 124

Such sentiments are surprising when keeping in mind that the English language is what it is today because of its long contact with foreign languages, especially Scandinavian and French. While there is no way of knowing how the English language and culture might have developed without the Scandinavian and French threats and influences, it is certain that it would have developed in some way differently. Whatever the attitudes towards the English (or British?) and their culture, the Norman Conquest played its part in making it what it is today.

In the chapter on the Late Modern English period Algeo and Pyles briefly discuss regional, social and ethnic variation, focusing mainly on British and American English. Their two page discussion of World English (singular!) is limited to a brief introduction into the difference between *first*, *second* and *foreign* language, an enumeration of the countries where English is "extremely important" (2004: 222), and a one-and-a-half page discussion of Irish English. The historical description is ended by a paragraph on "the essential oneness of all English" (2004: 224), which concludes that "the most important variety happens to be the standard English written by British and American authors" (ibid.), thus once more stressing the important linearity from Old English to standard English.

5.3.2. Baugh and Cable (2002)

Baugh and Cable approach their description of the history of the English language through a brief outlook into the future of English, which is immediately followed by a survey of the Indo-European language families. While Algeo and Pyles (2004)

did not discuss the history of the British Isles before the Germanic settlement of 450 AD, Baugh and Cable start their survey with an overview of the five hundred years previous to that event.

Confusingly, Baugh and Cable describe the Germanic settlers as "the founders of the English nation" (2002: 47) which again implies a political state of affairs that was not given at that time. Yet the linearity is not only constructed through the terms which are used to refer to the language, the country or its people, Baugh and Cable state it outright by saying that "[t]he evolution of English in the 1,500 years of its existence in England has been an unbroken one" (2002: 52). In a footnote on the term *Anglo-Saxon*, they even explain their preference for the term *Old English* as it "has the advantage of suggesting the unbroken continuity of English throughout its existence" (2002: 51).

While this account of the early history of the English language seems quite similar to that given in Algeo and Pyles (2004), the accounts differ drastically in the attitudes towards the Norman Conquest. While the latter described it as a "catastrophe" (2004: 124), Baugh and Cable are much more neutral in their assessment:

> Toward the close of the Old English period an event occurred that had a greater effect on the English language than any other in the course of its history. This event was the Norman Conquest in 1066. [...]
>
> The Norman Conquest changed the whole course of the English language.
>
> Baugh and Cable 2002: 108

Furthermore, Baugh and Cable's discussion of Present Day English is much more inclusive than the first text discussed. World-wide varieties of English are discussed in some detail, and a short overview of the best known English based pidgins and creoles is provided. As Alfred Baugh was a U.S. American linguist it is not surprising that the book ends with a lengthy discussion of American English, which is regularly updated by Thomas Cable in the newer editions.

5.3.3. Blake (1996)

In his preface to *A History of the English Language*, Blake explains his exclusive focus on standard English through saying that he wanted to give "the volume cohesion and [...] prevent it from trying to achieve too much" (1996: vi). While this is, of course, legitimate, it is interesting to note that Blake means Standard British English when writing "standard English", as he subsequently explains why for example Australian English was excluded. Additionally, Blake asserts in the introduction that "[t]o most people today 'English' indicates the variety of the language known as Standard English" (1996: 1), further justifying his choice to only cover the history of the standard. This focus is also reflected in the titles of some of the chapters: "The First English Standard", "The Aftermath of the First Standard" and "Political, Social and Pedagogical Background to the New Standard" (1996: v).

After an introduction of what a history of English is and a survey of the implications of the major changes in the English language, Blake begins his historical account with the chapter "Before Alfred" (1996: 47), which again emphasises his focus on standard language. While this might make him appear very dogmatic in his approach to the history of English, his account of the Germanic settlement differs greatly from the two discussed previously:

> Many might assume that the start of English dates from this migration from 450 AD onwards. But the tribes were only doing what they had done for many years: they were looking for new lands to settle [...]
>
> The new settlers in Britain almost certainly remained in touch with other Germanic peoples on the continent through trade and other means, and the language spoken on both sides of the North Sea cannot have been too different at this stage. [...]
>
> There was no sense of national identity and no national language in these early centuries of settlement.
>
> 1996: 54

It seems, then, that Blake is not in favour of fixing the beginnings of the English language to the year 450 AD, but rather argues for a gradual change.

Consequently, Blake does not give a definite date for the beginnings of the English language, and refers to the settlers as *Anglo-Saxons* rather than *the English*.

Blake's account of the beginning of the Middle English period is similar to that found in Baugh and Cable (2002), in that it gives great significance to the Norman Conquest. However, Blake discusses this period only briefly, and what he says about it is mostly in relation to the standards which formed later in the Middle English period. It seems rather fitting therefore that the final chapter which discusses recent developments in English is entitled "World Domination and Growing Variation".

5.3.4. Brinton and Arnovick (2006)

Brinton and Arnovick (2006) is one of the most extensive in scope of the texts, which allows the authors to discuss every issue in some detail. After an introduction into the discipline of historical linguistics, the sounds and writing system of English and the causes and mechanisms of language change, the text provides a (for this type of book very) comprehensive introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Indo-European language families.

Even though Brinton and Arnovick estimate that "Germanic settlers began arriving twenty years before [499]" (2006: 144), they claim that "[t]he Old English period covers a span of 617 years, from 449 to 1066 CE." This account is very much influenced by external, socio-political factors, while other texts provide different time-spans, usually justified by linguistic argument. While the text consistently refers to the Germanic settlers after their arrival on the British Isles as *Anglo-Saxons*, the country they are said to have invaded is called *England*.

As Brinton and Arnovick assess the Norman Conquest to be "perhaps the single most important event affecting the linguistic development of English" (2006: 230), they discuss the political events leading up to it and resulting from it in (relatively) great detail. Finally, their discussion of Modern English focuses in great detail on the different varieties of post-colonial Englishes, with an extended focus on British

and North American varieties, which they justify by the economic importance of these two. While the text does not discuss international Englishes or pidgins and creoles, there is an interesting discussion of the latter in the book, as the question is raised whether Middle English could be described as a result of creolisation (2006: 297). While this theory is rejected because "no structural changes can be attributed directly to French" (2006: 298) and the French influence is mainly lexical, Brinton and Arnovick use it to highlight the substantial influence of French on English vocabulary. Such a discussion helps to break up the linearity, as it shows that there were major disturbances in the history of English which should not be disregarded.

5.3.5. Freeborn (1998)

Maybe the most obvious example of linearity is Freeborn's *From Old English to Standard English* (1998). Here, the title is programme: after a short introduction to language change in general, the texts details "How the English language came to Britain" (1998: v) and then proceeds in a linear manner from Old English over Middle English (or rather what he sees as representative varieties of these) to Modern Standard English. This means that the text is very exclusive in its approach to the history of English, as it does not include information on regional, social or ethnic variation. Freeborn's justification for such an approach is similar to that of Blake, as he writes in the introduction that "for many people [Standard English] is synonymous with 'the English language'".

Taking up the features previously discussed we find that Freeborn refers to the land where the Germanic tribes settled as *England*, and calls the settlers *the English* from an early point onwards. Similar to Baugh and Cable (who claimed that "the Germanic tribes [were] the founders of the English nation" (2002: 47)), Freeborn uses the term *nation* in a context in which this concept is not normally used, as he says that "[t]he English were not a politically unified nation until the 10th century" (1998: 35). This, of course, implies that the English **were** in fact a unified

nation from the tenth century onwards (at least for some time), an implication that seems highly improbable given the happenings of the eleventh century.

Freeborn also invites debate through the title of the chapter "The English Language is Brought to Britain" (1998: 9), which might convey to students that the language the Germanic settlers brought with them to the British Isles can already meaningfully be called *English*. While other scholars (see above) have tied the beginnings of the English language to the Germanic settlements in 450 AD, Freeborn's wording indicates that the language which the settlers brought with them was (at least for a while) the same that they continued to use (but which was subject to constant gradual change). While Freeborn does not elaborate on this point, attentive students might come to understand the difficulty of finding a starting point for a language.

As Freeborn focuses exclusively on the history of Standard English, there is no discussion of postcolonial or world English varieties to speak of.

5.3.6. Görlach (1997)

As Görlach's text is the one which focuses most exclusively on internal reasons for language change, it is not surprising that the periods of the history of English are determined on linguistic grounds, rather than socio-political ones. The beginning of Old English, the transition from Old to Middle English, from Middle to Early Modern English, and from Early Modern to Modern English are all defined and characterised by linguistic parameters:

> The earliest OE texts exhibit conspicuous differences from those of the most closely related languages. Since the textual transmission begins some 200 years after the Gmc settlement, statements about the language of the first settlers, about its degree of homogeneity and its distance from other WGmc languages must be hypothetical.
>
> 1997: 21

While all other texts but one (McLaughlin 1979) analysed here divide the relevant chapters into periods of English, discussing question of syntax, phonology and so

on in subchapters, Görlach focuses his arrangement on linguistic categories (such as *syntax*, *phonology, inflexion* or *word-formation*), discussing previous states of English only when relevant.

As Görlach is not concerned with the socio-political implications of the history of English (trying to keep his coverage of external factors to a minimum), it is not surprising that he approaches issues from a different angle than the other texts: pidgins and creoles, for example, are dealt with in the section "'Language mixture'" in the chapter "Language Contact" (1997: 137). Other than that, Görlach does not describe any varieties of Modern English other than Standard English.

5.3.7. Graddol et al. (2007)

When comparing all twelve texts to each other, the first thing that I found striking about Graddol et al. (2007) was its title: nine of the texts use the words *history* and *English* in their title, two make this historical aspect clear through the wording (*The Origins and Development of the English Language* and *From Old English to Standard English*). The title of Graddol et al. (2007), on the other hand, is simply *Changing English*. To me, this can have two meanings: a report on how English is changing, and actively changing the language. It therefore seems fitting that the focus of the book does not lie primarily on the history of English (to which only three of seven chapters are dedicated), but also focuses strongly on how the language is changing in the present.

Already in the introductory chapter "English Voices", Joan Swann (the contributor of this first chapter) stresses the legitimacy of non-native English varieties and the need to treat them accordingly. This is done throughout the book, not only in the sections on Modern English(es), but also in the discussion of Old and Middle English:

> Chapter 1 showed how the term 'English language' embraces a rich diversity of linguistic forms used in different places and contexts and by different people. This chapter and the next two examine the historical dimensions of such diversity. Where did the English language

> come from? What have been the major influences that have caused the language to develop into its modern forms?
>
> Graddol et al. 2007: 39

The terms used to explain the beginnings of English are somewhat different than those used in the other texts: Leith (the contributor of chapter 2) does not commit himself to giving the Germanic settlers a name, referring to them only as "[t]he newcomers" (2007: 40). He furthermore does not commit himself to the date 450 AD as the beginnings of English:

> When records appear 200 or so years later, in the form of inscriptions and manuscripts, they indicate that an identifiable language variety had evolved, very similar to Germanic languages such as Old Frisian and with internal dialectal variation between the north and south of England. This languages is now called Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) and the people who spoke it are usually referred to as Anglo-Saxons.
>
> 2007: 41

Leith describes the language as having "evolved" from the "variety of Germanic dialects" (2007: 40) that the settlers brought with them, rather than fixing the beginnings of the language to the time of settlement like other texts (Algeo and Pyles or Baugh and Cable) have done. Note, also, that Leith refers to the people as *Anglo-Saxons* rather than *the English*, as some other texts do (e.g. Algeo and Pyles). Throughout the chapter, Leith takes care to explain what internal and external evidence there is to support his claims, and in what way they can be interpreted to arrive at a reconstruction of the history of English. Similarly, he explains the changes in the late Old English period both through internal and external causes of change.

In his discussion of the transition from Old to Middle English, Leith explains the different views taken by different scholars:

> For scholars who have viewed the history of England and English as one of unbroken progress, the Conquest has often been a milestone on the road to 'civilisation', playing a key role in the development of Modern English. But another view, perhaps more widely held, sees the

> events of the Conquest in terms of (an at least temporary) decline: as the wrecking of a relatively sophisticated 'native' Anglo-Saxon culture by a 'foreign' and tyrannical French one.
>
> 2007: 64

By mentioning that there are those scholars who see the history of English as an "unbroken progress" and those subscribing to different views, Leith echos Milroy's claims about constructed linearity (see 3.1.). Without directly and aggressively attacking such an approach, he intimates to the reader that a different - less linear - interpretation might be more suitable.

The second chapter dedicated to the history of English is the one with which we were primarily concerned in 5.1.1.4, "Modernity and English as a national language". It covers everything from the emergence of a standardised variety of English to eighteenth century codification. The third chapter already deals with more recent history, as it explores the English language on its way from "colonial to post-colonial". This includes the expansion of English in the British isles as well as beyond to North America and the Caribbean, as well as West Africa.

Chapter six is dedicated to a topic not to be found in any other book in the sample, "Accent as Social Symbol". Chapter seven discusses "Dialect Variation in English", considering Standard Englishes (note the plural!) as well as micro and macro factors of variation. The final chapter is concerned with more global factors of language change, like style shifting and codeswitching. Additionally, the chapters are supplemented with key readings selected to give readers an insight not only into the issues discussed but also into how the linguistic discourse works, similar to the readings found in McIntyre (2009).

5.3.8. Leith (1997)

Leith's monograph states its programme already in its title, *A Social history of English*. Thus it could be seen as a counterpart to Görlach (1997), which focuses almost exclusively on language internal processes. Leith has very few systematical descriptions of varieties or dialects, focusing rather on social than linguistic

implications. According to the editor, this text was "the first history of the English language to utilise the techniques, insights and concerns of sociolinguistics." (1997: i) It is not surprising that some features of this text are quite similar to Leith's contribution in Graddol et al. (2007).

Parallel to Graddol et al. (2007), Leith uses the term *Anglo-Saxons* to refer to the Germanic settlers and draws attention to the close kinship of Old English to Germanic dialects spoken on the continent:

> In describing the Anglo-Saxon settlement of what is now England, we shall see how English came into contact with the Celtic language of the Britons [...]
>
> Thus, it has been said that the earliest spears of English used a dialect of Germanic, similar in terms of linguistic structure to the other kinds of speech used by other, related, Germanic tribes.
>
> 1997: 7-8

In contrast to the many texts in this sample which justify their often exclusive focus on the West Saxon dialect because of its alleged function as a norm, Leith claims that "there was no norm of language during the first thousand years of England's history", dismissing the West Saxon norm by saying that "[t]he periods of centralisation under Alfred and Athelstan were short-lived" (1997: 8). Thus we see that his rejection of established ways of telling the history of the English language seems to have been greater in his monograph than in his contribution to Graddol et. al (2007).

Generally speaking, Leith is very critical towards the spread of English, both in the British Isles and throughout the world, calling this spread an "imposition" (1997: 149). The text focuses strongly on how English is a threat to minority languages in Britain, and to native languages in colonial and post-colonial settings. This prompts the Times Literary Supplement to write that "[t]he book is an excellent antidote to all one hears about what a wonderful language English is, and how its virtues have led to its being so widely adopted" (1997: i).

The final part of the book, which is dedicated to "Evidence, interpretation and theory" (1997: 215), discusses one of the research questions in this thesis: how the discipline of historical linguistics has helped shape the modern understanding of English. Leith's focus, however, lies on the selection of text examples that different authors use to support their claims and theories. He argues that through including certain texts and excluding others, the history of English has often been represented as the "story of standardisation" (1997: 217). Through explaining that traditionally, text examples have been arranged in a way to show "increasing intelligibility the more 'modern' they are, almost as if English developed in a purely linear fashion from one unified state to another" (ibid.), he again attacks the traditional representations of English explained above.

5.3.9. McIntyre (2009)

The structure of McIntyre (2009) has to be seen in connection to the common structure of all books in the *Routledge English Language Introduction* series to which it belongs. The books in the series are generally divided into four sections: *Introduction*, *Development*, *Exploration* and *Extension*. Each of the eight topics is then discussed in each of the four sections, the focus being different in every section. In the *Extension*, key readings are provided for each of the issues, "intended to supplement the information contained in the rest of the book and to provide a springboard for exploring the topics covered in more detail" (2009: 128). Rather than claiming that this account of the history of English is complete, McIntyre states that he provides an overview only, encouraging students to explore the history though additional readings.

Throughout the book, McIntyre stresses the diversity of the English language, asking outright whether he ought to be recording "[t]he history of English or the history of Englishes" (2009: 8). Similar to Graddol et al. (2007), McIntyre examines what evidence there is and how it can be and has been interpreted. Specifically he questions in how far written evidence can be used to describe and reconstruct different dialects in the Old English period (McIntyre 2009: 8-9).

As already seen in 5.1.1.5., McIntyre first introduces and explains different theories alongside each other, and then explains why he favours a particular one of them, or none at all. In this way, he leaves room for students to make up their own minds about contested issues. This effect is further enhanced by the exercises and reflective questions distributed across the book.

Similar to Brinton and Arnovick (2006) and Graddol et al. (2007), McIntyre (2009) dedicates relatively much space to the discussion of colonialism and imperialism, as well as post-colonial and global English varieties. While being less radical in his comments that Leith (1997), the text nonetheless questions the methods through which English was spread throughout the world.

5.3.10. McLaughlin (1970)

The title of the book, *Aspects of the History of English*, already stresses that only certain aspects of the history of English will be dealt with in the text. These aspects are ordered in a way similar to Görlach (1997), as the main focus does not lie on the chronological development, but rather on different aspects of language change (phonemic, grammatical and semantic). The socio-political history is considered in a chapter of its own which precedes the discussion of language internal changes.

McLaughlin begins his account of the history of English with a survey of Proto-Indo-European and a description of the situation in the British Isles previous to the Germanic settlement. He then quotes the Venerable Bede's story of the Germanic settlement, yet also points out differing accounts: "Scholars are not in complete agreement as to the precise continental homeland of the three Germanic tribes mentioned by Bede" (1970: 28).

However, McLaughlin creates historicity in the text through saying that "it was the dialect spoken in East Anglia that made the greatest contribution to what was to become Modern Standard British English" (1970: 29). No other text reaches this far back to describe a direct influence on Modern Standard English, as most texts in this context only consider the importance of different Middle English dialects.

The historical survey ends in the eighteenth century, and does not discuss colonialism or post-colonial varieties of English. Even the sections on language change do not discuss recent changes or variation in different varieties.

5.3.11. Strang (1991)

Strang (1991) is another example of a text focusing very strongly on the internal history of the English language. Her approach to the representation of the history of English is very structured and discusses it in terms of periods of two hundred years in reverse chronological order. This makes it sometimes difficult to follow the development of English, as later states precede earlier language states in the book.

An interesting point that Strang makes is that the dialect diversity of the Germanic settlers which led to the formation of different Old English dialects might not have been a result of the different origins of the settlers on the continent. She argues that as migration took place over at least a century, the variation might just as easily have been a result of language changing through time (Strang 1991: 383). This is but one example of Strang's practice to only state something with confidence if she has some kind of evidence for it. Indeed, she makes hardly any claims about the language of the earliest settlers, saying that "we are almost without direct evidence about the language we may still find it convenient to call 'English'" (ibid.).

The discussion of the Norman Conquest in the text is very brief, as the focus lies on the results it had on the language rather than on the people. There is, however, one sentence at the end of the section discussing the Norman Conquest which reads very similar to what Algeo and Pyles (2004: 124) said about it:

> Culturally, [the] period [from 970-1170] is broken-backed; 1066 marks the division between an age that, if not Golden, is Silver, and one that if not Dark, is Twilight.
>
> Strang 1991: 284

Like in Algeo and Pyles (2004: 124), the Norman Conquest is presented as an event which had a disastrous effect on the English culture.

There is some discussion of variation in native varieties of English embedded in larger discussions of borrowing and phonological change. Even though the survey reaches the present (or what was the present in 1970) there is no discussion of colonialism or post-colonial varieties of English (with the exception of one brief section on borrowings from American English).

5.3.12. van Gelderen (2006)

Van Gelderen (2006) provides a very detailed account of various aspects of the history of English, beginning her historical survey with Proto-Indo-European and ending it with a chapter on "English around the World" (2006: 249). Every chapter is supplemented by a variety of text examples, exercises and study questions.

Van Gelderen's account of the origins of English are somewhat confusing. While she states in chapter one that "English officially starts when the Germanic tribes and their languages reach the British isles, in 449" (2006: 2), she relativises this statement in the final chapter by saying that "[t]his date is quite arbitrary because the language did not change right away."

Some features in the text indicate a linear construction of the history of English, while others seem to imply the opposite. The statement that "[w]hat started as a Germanic dialect spoken in a small part of England is now a language spoken by over a billion people in many parts of the world (as a first or second language)" (2006: 3) seems to imply a direct and undisturbed ancestry of Modern English that can be traced back to the Germanic settlers. It is also somewhat peculiar that she would refer to the place the Germanic tribes settled as *England* while the language they spoke is as yet *a Germanic dialect*. On the other hand, van Gelderen discusses the possibility of treating Middle English as a creole.

Van Gelderen's treatment of worldwide varieties of English is very extensive for a historical linguistic textbook. Indeed, she covers a wider variety of issues than the

text which has the second largest discussion of these varieties, Brinton and Arnovick (2006). The text not only discusses post-colonial settings, but also explores English as a Lingua Franca issues.

6. Discussion

6.1. Extent of variation

Even in this rather small sample of twelve textbooks we can already find a great amount of variation. It is likely that this variation is simply a result of the time that has elapsed between the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries and now. The further removed an investigation is from the time the thing under investigation happened, the more room normally opens up for interpretation, and thus variation. This effect is likely to decrease with the amount of direct information available. However, the comment on the linguistic situation in the relevant area in the fifteenth century is rather limited, which opens up the room for interpretations.

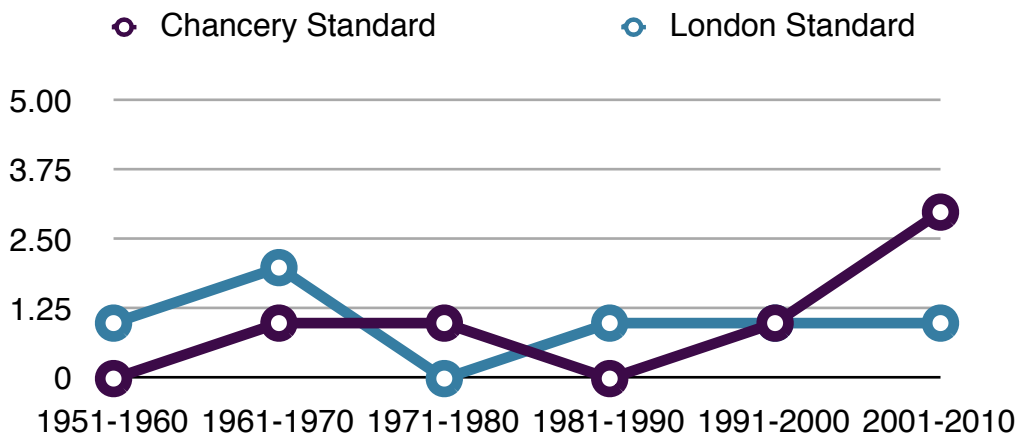
As detailed in section 5.2., there are no clear patterns to be found in the arguments used to support the relevant theories. Neither does the arguing for one specific type of Middle English Standard English automatically lead to one type of argument being used, nor is there a correlation within the arguments of the type "if *Chancery* then also *Elite*". The lack of a conclusive pattern is evidenced in Tables 1 and 2 in the appendix.

There are many possible reasons for why any writer might have used one argument or not another. These reasons include personal preference, evidence or agenda, but without examining the motives of the authors the question of reason can never be satisfactorily answered. Where it was relatively clear from the text itself why a certain argument was used, this was duly discussed in section 5.2., in all other cases I will refrain from speculation.

6.2. Temporal implications

Taking a closer look at the date of publication we find that there is no conclusive correlation between the year a text was published and the theory it argues for. It seems especially interesting that those texts in the sample who have been published in several editions have not changed their basic line of argumentation between the first and last editions, as this might indicate that the different lines of

argumentation cannot be attributed to new findings in the field. Interestingly enough, an arrangement of the texts on a timeline, divided into the two categories assumed by me, shows that in this sample, London Standard used to be more popular than Chancery Standard as a theory of explaining the issue in the 1950s and 1960s, whereas Chancery Standard has become the more popular theory since the turn of the century (see Graph 1).



Graph 1: Texts published by decade

This result is somewhat contrary to my expectations, as I would have supposed Laura Wright's and James Milroy's argumentations on behalf or London Standard (and more specifically the important influence of the merchant class) to affect linguists' attitudes on this matter. Most indicative of this counter-intuitive development is perhaps Graddol et al.'s text from 2006, as it largely argues for a Chancery Standard representation. What is so interesting about this is that Dick Leith in one of the authors of the chapter in question, even though his own monograph (first published in 1983) argues exactly opposite. This reflects the fact that while the secondary literature discussing linguistic textbooks argue strongly for theories connected to London Standard, many recent textbooks have embraced Samuels' and Fisher's research and classifications. Of course, the earliest textbooks in this sample could not have made use of either Samuels (1963) or Fisher (1986), as these text were not available then. However, as the sample used in this study is

quite small, all such interpretations might in fact be misleading and contrary to what might be found in a bigger sample.

The implications of the date of publication for the representation of the history of English and the structure and purpose of the texts will be discussed in the following two sections.

6.3. Representations of the history of English

While none of the texts voiced this concern quite as explicitly as Milroy (2002: 19; see section 3.1.), some of the texts do draw attention to the fact that a strictly linear representation of the history of English might be misleading. In both of his contributions (Leith 1997 and Graddol et al. 2007), Leith raises this issue and incorporates a critique of it into his text. Other texts question the established history through introducing discourses which disrupt this unified picture of English, as Brinton and Arnovick (2006: 297) and van Gelderen (2006: 106) discuss the possibility of describing Middle English as a creole.

When considering Milroy's assertions regarding the outright prescriptivism in the comments of linguists like Wyld or Skeat (see section 3.2.), we find that these sentiments are not present in that way in any of the texts in the sample. Rather, such comments are used as evidence of prescriptive attitudes towards language change, for example in Graddol (2007: 100) and Brinton and Arnovick (2006: 362). While writers like Wyld and Skeat saw comments like Swift's "Proposal for Correcting, Improving and Ascertaining the English Tongue" (1712) as evidence for the corrupting changes taking place in the English language, such texts have since been studied in their own right as evidence of the prescriptive situation that was a major contributing factor in seventeenth and eighteenth century language codification. It should be noted, however, that only those of the texts which are concerned with the external (socio-politic) situation of the history of English deal with this aspect, as those texts solely focusing on the internal factors of language change almost completely disregard social comment of that kind.

When regarding the scope of the books we see that the most recent texts cover a broader spectrum of current varieties of English than their older counterparts. This is easily explained, however, when considering that the scientific interest in World Englishes is relatively new. On the other hand, the lack of a discussion of postcolonial varieties as well as regional and ethnical varieties in the texts published in the 1990s cannot be explained in this way. One text, Freeborn (1998), states its explicit focus on the history of the standard variety already in the title (*From Old English to Standard English*), while Blake (1996), states this focus in the preface. Unfortunately, however, such clarifications are very rare. In all other books where there is an almost exclusive focus on the history of Standard English, this has not been specifically pointed out. On the other hand, those authors who use a more inclusive meaning of the term *English* explain which aspects have been dealt with and which have been excluded and for what reasons. No book gives a complete account of the history of the whole language, as already defining what this entity supposedly is would pose the first major problem. Any attempt at completeness would certainly exceed the restrictions of a single volume book, and due to the ever changing and evolving nature of language could never be completed.

As an example by which we can demonstrate some of the implications mentioned above, we can cite the terms used to refer to the Germanic settlers, their language, and the place they settled in. As we saw in section 5.3., many of the texts use *England* to refer to the place, and *English* for the language and people, while others use the term *Anglo-Saxon*, or simply say *the settlers* or *the newcomers*. The question of when English became English, so to speak, is a problem discussed by many historical linguists. Even some of the texts, like Baugh and Cable (2002) or McIntyre (2009) problematise this issue.

There are some likely reasons for why so many of the texts do not discuss this issue in more depth and use different terms to refer to the items mentioned above: convenience, teachability and policy. We have already discussed that referring to

the language of the Germanic settlers as *English* can be a matter of policy, as such a practice highlights the unbroken ancestry of Modern English over at least 1,500 years. Additionally, the subject becomes more teachable and more easily understandable for newcomers to the subject when familiar terms are used to describe previous state of affairs. It is a matter of convenience, as there probably are no unambiguous terms, or terms which are not attached with certain preconceived ideas. The problem is that whenever we try to refer to things a long time in the past by use of our modern language rather than the original names given by settlers (which might not always be understandable), it becomes highly convenient to refer to these things by names which already have some meaning in the discourse, rather than inventing new ones.

Already in this relatively small sample we can document a tendency towards more *inclusive* accounts of the history of English. All four texts which were first published after the year 2000 feature extensive discussions of varieties other than Standard English, including postcolonial Englishes, World Englishes, as well as social and regional variation. Only two of the remaining eight texts have a comparable scope: Leith (1997) and Baugh and Cable (2002). This suggests to me that the limitations of the genre of historical linguistic textbooks might be expanding to become more inclusive of non-standard varieties and to accept standardised varieties as such which have not previously been granted this status (e.g. Standard Singaporean English). This possibility we be further explored below.

6.4. From unity to diversity - the changing of the genre

While we can record certain attitudes in certain texts, there does not seem to be any clear correlation whatsoever between attitude to language change in general and the presentation of the emergence of a standard English through one specific theory in particular. What can be seen, however, is a tendency towards more critical explanations and evaluations in the post-2000 texts, as well as those texts that focus very strongly on the external history of the English language. Of the twelve texts regarded in this study, I would include five books into that category,

based on the analyses in 5.3.: Brinton and Arnovick (2006), Graddol et al. (2007), Leith (1983), McIntyre (2008) and van Gelderen (2006). Even in these five texts, many inconsistencies occur and not all questions are answered satisfactorily, yet I would argue that all of them regard the emergence of a standard English more critically than the other texts.

Interestingly enough, the five texts have precious little in common as regards their argumentations: two of them argue in favour of London Standard, two of them in favour of Chancery Standard. Additionally, there is no one justification for the superiority of the one variety over others given by all five of these texts (see Table 2 in the appendix). This is another indication that there is no clear correlation between the stance of an author and the theory they argue for regarding the emergence of a standard English. What can furthermore be seen is a clear tendency towards more inclusive approaches to historical linguistics, that is that a variety of theories and approaches are introduced alongside each other, even if these are not those favoured by the authors.

This different approach is also reflected in the way the texts report on the different theories: while older texts are very dogmatic and present their arguments as fact, more recent texts introduce different arguments through the reporting voice, thereby creating distance:

> More recently, two assumptions made by Samuels **have been called into question**, namely that the standard developed out of a prestige dialect (the Chancery standard) and that it was centered in London. **Many scholars now believe** that the influence of the merchant or middle class **may** have been underestimated as well as that of more northerly dialects which accompanied migrants into the capital city. *(my emphasis)*
>
> Brinton and Arnovick 2006: 301

A second way of making texts seem less dogmatic is the increased use of hedging. Both the example above and the one below mitigate their assertions through the modifier *may*, thereby admitting room for different interpretations.

> Chancery English **may** be the beginning of a written standard, one that does not necessarily represent spoken English. (*my emphasis*)
>
> van Gelderen 2006: 16

As we find that such developments are increasingly more common in more recent texts, it is easy to argue that the paradigms of the textbook genre might be changing. While textbooks used to be very dogmatic and had a narrative that was designed to instruct students through reading only (which still holds true for the newest editions of books published before the turn of the century, for example Baugh and Cable 2002 or Algeo and Pyles 2004), modern textbooks include many activities and exercises, making easier both the teaching process for lecturers as well as the learning process for students. Where before students were expected to learn through reading, modern textbooks call for critical thought and reflection.

One significant difference between what I call the pre-2000 texts and the post-2000 texts is the purpose of the texts. While the older texts are introductory texts which might be used as reference material in classes on the history of English, the newer texts have been written in a way that allows them to be better integrated into the course. Elly van Gelderen (2006: ix) writes in the preface to her textbook that she wanted to write a book herself as none of those already on the market satisfied her needs as a teacher of the history of English. Accordingly, van Gelderen (2006), Brinton and Arnovick (2006), Graddol et al. (2007) and McIntyre (2009) are all intended to be used for teaching in the classroom, as they contain exercises and class assignments as well as discussion questions. This difference in purpose is also noticeable in the text themselves, as the earlier texts seem to be informative only, while the later texts seek to inform and challenge the students to participate more actively alike. The post-2000 texts have a strong focus on encouraging the students to evaluate the sources critically and thus arriving at their own conclusions, rather than presenting one possible reconstruction of the history of the English language as the only correct one.

This paradigm shift in the genre of historical linguistic textbooks seems to go hand in hand with a rethinking of the linguistic discipline. This is, for example, demonstrated by a stronger focus on non-standardised and non-native varieties, as well as a greater interest in post-colonial and World Englishes. If we regard what the post-2000 textbooks (together with Leith 1997) achieve in comparison with the pre-2000 books, we see that the newer texts put a strong focus on the diversity of English, where previously textbooks emphasised unity.

It furthermore seems to me that the discipline of linguistics is becoming increasingly self-reflective, as more and more meta-linguistic discourse is integrated into the discipline itself. In this small sample of texts we can already see this development, as for example Brinton and Arnovick (2006) or Graddol et al. (2007) include a section on the study of historical linguistics, where the purpose and methods of the discipline are questioned. Through this approach, students are equipped with a background against which they can read the remainder of the book, thus enabling them to approach complex issues more critically.

7. Conclusion

Over the course of approximately the last twenty years, various linguists have claimed that the discipline of historical linguistics contributes to modern misconceptions of the superiority of Standard English over other varieties of English due to its exclusive focus on this one variety. Additionally, English historical linguistics has been 'accused' of wrongfully representing the history of English in a linear way that excludes diversity and focuses on standardised forms, thereby providing it with historicity (Milroy 2006: 152-154).

This paper set out to investigate whether these claims could be substantiated in a relatively representative sample of twelve textbooks published between 1951 and 2009. To achieve this, the chapters in the texts covering the emergence of a standard English were compared and contrasted to each other to reveal their lines of argumentation as well as the variation to be found in the coverage of a relatively short time-span. This was then in turn compared to an analysis of how the texts represent the history of the English language as a whole. Thereby I hoped to show correlations between the attitudes of an author towards language change and the way in which the emergence of English was presented.

While I did not find any direct correlation between the author's attitude and the specific theories he or she used to explain the emergence of English, I could detect a tendency towards more critical evaluations of different theories. This goes hand in hand with an assessment of the historical linguistic discipline as a whole, as more and more texts explore the discourses used in the genre and explain how they work. Thus, those new books already incorporate discussions of the kind found in this paper, as they explain variation and question sources.

It seems, then, that the historical linguistic textbook genre has undergone a paradigm shift, which could be said to reflect a paradigm shift in the (historical) linguistic discipline itself. To confirm this, a similar study with a greater sample would have to be carried out. It might also be interesting to carry out similar studies in other linguistic disciplines, in order to ascertain whether a possible

paradigm shift is limited to historical linguistic textbooks or can also be found elsewhere.

The variation recorded is unsystematic to such a high degree that it would suggest that even a bigger sample might not show conclusive patterns. There is neither a pattern of arguments that always go together, nor a tendency for certain arguments to be employed more or less in pre- and post-2000 texts.

It would therefore seem reasonable for future research not to focus so much on the variation in the textbooks, but rather to further analyse the patterns of the telling of the story of the English language. In order to conclusively ascertain whether a paradigm shift really has taken place, a greater sample of post-2000 textbooks should be examined. It might also be interesting to compare and contrast texts written by sociolinguists with texts written by historical linguists who do not focus on the social aspects of language to such a great extent.

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Figures

Figure 1: Map of London from a historical atlas by William R. Shepherd. accessed through wikipedia 11 November 2009: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:London_1300_Historical_Atlas_William_R_Shepherd_(died_1934).PNG

Appendix

Table 1: table accompanying sections 5.1. and 5.3.

Author(s)	Ed	1st Ed	Title	SH	CS	LS	Mn	Sp	Im	Sc
Algeo, Pyles	2004	1964	The Origins and Development of the English Language	x		x	x		-	-
Baugh; Cable	2002	1951	A History of the English Language	x		x		x	x	
Blake	1996	1996	A History of the English Language	x	x		x			x
Brinton, Arnovick	2006	2006	The English Language. A Linguistic History			x	-	-	x	
Freeborn	1998	1992	From Old English to Standard English	x		x	-	-	x	
Görlach	1997	1974	The Linguistic History of English	x	x			x	x	
Graddol et al.	2007	2006	Changing English		x		x	x	-	-
Leith	1997	1983	A social history of English			x	x		x	
McIntyre	2009	2008	History of English: a resource book for students		x		-	-		x
McLaughlin	1970	1970	Aspects of the History of English	x		x	-	-	-	-
Strang	1991	1970	A History of English	x	x		x		x	
v Gelderen	2006	2006	A History of the English Language		x		x		x	

Table 2: table accompanying section 5.2.

Author(s)	Ed	1st Ed	Title	Ki	Pr	Tr	Un	El	Me	Pp	Ln
Algeo, Pyles	2004	1964	The Origins and Development of the English Language	**x**	**x**						
Baugh; Cable	2002	1951	A History of the English Language		**x**		**x**		**x**	**x**	**x**
Blake	1996	1996	A History of the English Language	**xx**							
Brinton, Arnovick	2006	2006	The English Language. A Linguistic History			**x**	**x**	**x**	**x**	**x**	**x**
Freeborn	1998	1992	From Old English to Standard English	**x**	**x**						
Görlach	1997	1974	The Linguistic History of English		x	x		**x**	**x**		
Graddol et al.	2007	2007	Changing English		**x**			**x**			
Leith	1997	1983	A social history of English	**x**	**x**	**xx**	**x**				**x**
McIntyre	2009	2009	History of English: a resource book for students		**x**	**x**		**x**			
McLaughlin	1970	1970	Aspects of the History of English	**x**	**x**		**x**	**x**	**x**		**x**
Strang	1991	1970	A History of English					**x**	**x**		
v Gelderen	2006	2006	A History of the English Language		**x**			**x**			

(texts arguing for London Standard printed in bold)

Abbreviations

Ed	Date of publication of the edition used in the survey
1st Ed	Date of publication of the first edition
CS	Chancery Standard
LS	London Standard
SH	single history of language as standard
Mn	standardisation planned/manufactured by someone
Sp	standardisation arose somewhat spontaneously out of need of speakers
Im	Immigration: mingling of dialect in London, hence northern features
Sc	Scribes of northern origin, hence northern features

Ki	King/Monarchy/bureaucracy helped to strengthen SE
Pr	Printing strengthened SE
Tr	trade and merchants strengthened SE
Un	Universities strengthened SE
El	social or political elite strengthened SE
Me	Metropolis status of London strengthened SE
Pp	SE was strengthened because the area was the most populated
Ln	Linguistic reasons, i.e. Midland English was middle between extreme north and south dialects

German abstract

Die vorliegende Arbeit beschäftigt sich mit der Repräsentation des Anfangs des Standardisierungsprozesses in der englischen Sprache. Hierzu wurden zwölf historisch-linguistische Textbücher kritisch gelesen und analysiert. Spezifisch werden in der Arbeit drei Fragen beantwortet: wie viel Variation gibt es in den relevanten Kapiteln der Bücher; haben eventuelle präskriptive Einstellungen der Autoren Einfluss auf deren Repräsentation des Anfangs des Standardisierungsprozesses; und wie hat sich dieser Einfluss speziell und das historisch-linguistische Textbuch Genre generell im Laufe von fünfzig Jahren verändert?

Der Ursprung dieser Fragestellungen liegt in der Arbeit des Soziolinguisten James Milroy, der in mehreren Büchern und Artikeln die Meinung vertritt, dass historische Linguisten bewusst die Geschichte der englischen Sprache verfälscht darstellen. Diese Verfälschung hat Milroy's Ansicht nach zur Folge, dass die Geschichte unproblematischer dargestellt wird, als sie eigentlich ist, wodurch, unter anderem, das Standard Englische ungebührend legitimiert wird. Milroy sieht hier einen starken Zusammenhang zu präskriptiven Einstellungen in der Sprachwissenschaft (Milroy 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2006).

Da Milroy's Behauptungen sich aber hautsächlich auf ältere historisch-linguistische Texte stützen (z.B. Sweet, Skeat oder Wyld), kann nicht davon ausgegangen werden, dass ein solcher Zusammenhang immer noch besteht. Um festzustellen, ob Milroy's Aussagen auch auf moderne Texte zutreffen, wurden für diese Arbeit zwölf historisch-linguistische Textbücher repräsentativ ausgewählt, die nach 1950 erstmals publiziert wurden. Folgende Bücher wurden ausgewählt (in alphabetischer Reihenfolge; das Jahr der ersten Publikation ist in eckigen Klammern, das Jahr der Publikation der Edition, mit der großteils gearbeitet wurde, in runden Klammern gegeben):

- John Algeo und Thomas Pyles (2004 [1964]) - The Origins and Development of the English Language

- Albert C. Baugh und Thomas Cable (2002 [1951]) - A History of the English Language
- Norman F. Blake (1996) - A History of the English Language
- Laurel J. Brinton und Leslie K. Arnovick (2006) - The English Language. A Linguistic History
- Dennis Freeborn (1998 [1992]) - From Old English to Standard English
- Manfred Görlach (1997 [1974]) - The Linguistic History of English
- David Graddol, Dick Leith, Joan Swan, Martin Rhys und Julia Gillen (2007) - Changing English
- Dick Leith (1997 [1983]) - A social history of English
- Dan McIntyre (2009 [2008]) - History of English: a resource book for students
- John McLaughlin (1970) - Aspects of the History of English
- Barbara Strang (1991 [1970]) - A History of English
- Elly van Gelderen (2006) - A History of the English Language

Schon in diesem relativ kleinen Sample von zwölf Textbüchern findet sich ein signifikantes Ausmaß an Variation. Ganz allgemein lassen sich die Bücher in zwei Gruppen einteilen: solche, die den Anfang des Standard Englischen im lokalen Dialekt Londons sehen (London Standard), und solche, die es dem Chancery Standard (das Englisch der offiziellen königlichen Dokumente) zuschreiben. Doch auch innerhalb dieser beiden Gruppen von je sechs Texten gibt es weitere Variation: vereinfacht dargestellt werden insgesamt acht verschiedene Argumente benutzt um für die eigene Darstellungsweise zu argumentieren, keine zwei Texte benutzen jedoch die gleichen Argumente. Auch die Anzahl der Argumente ist nicht einheitlich: während Blake (1996) nur ein Argument benutzt, machen zum Beispiel Brinton und Arnovick von sechs gebrauch. Die Argumente werden verwendet um zu erklären, warum eine bestimmte Form von Englisch standardisiert wurde und beschreiben den Einfluss den eine bestimmte Institution oder Gegebenheit auf die Standardisierung ausübt. In dem Sample wurden acht relevante Einflüsse genannt:

- König/Monarchie/Bürokratie
- Aufkommen des Buchdrucks in England
- London als Zentrum des Handels
- "Bildungsdreieck" London - Oxford - Cambridge
- soziale und politische Elite in London
- London als Metropolis: Einfluss der Einwanderer
- London bevölkerungsreichstes Gebiet Englands
- Dialekt der East Midlands Kompromiss zwischen extremeren Dialekten in Nord- und Südengland

Um zu eruieren welchen Einfluss die Einstellung der Autoren zu Sprachgebrauch und Sprachveränderung auf ihre Darstellung der Geschichte der Englischen Sprache hat, wurde anhand einiger Eckpunkte analysiert, wie die Sprachgeschichte dargestellt wird. Zu diesen Eckpunkten zählen: der Beginn der englischen Sprache (beziehungsweise was als solches konstruiert wird), die normannische Eroberung Englands (the Norman Conquest) im Jahr 1066, und die Entwicklung der Sprache im zwanzigsten und einundzwanzigsten Jahrhundert. Besonderes Augenmerk wurde darauf gelegt ob nur die Geschichte des Standard Englischen behandelt wird, oder ob der diverse Charakter der Sprache hervorgehoben wurde. Dies spiegelt sich vor allem in der Analyse des letzen Eckpunktes nieder, da besonders darauf geachtet wurde, ob die Texte vor allem in der jüngeren Sprachgeschichte Varietäten wie die Postcolonial Englishes oder World Englishes behandeln.

Die Analyse der Texte ergab, dass der Zusammenhang zwischen Präsentation und Präskriptivismus, wie er von Milroy angenommen wurde, sehr wohl in einigen der Bücher festgestellt werden konnte. Andererseits deuten die Ergebnisse jedoch auch auf einen Paradigmenwechsel im Genre der historisch-linguistischen Textbücher hin. So wurde in einigen Bereichen ein starker Kontrast festgestellt zwischen Texten, die vor dem Jahr 2000 erstmals publiziert wurden, und solchen, die im 21. Jahrhundert erschienen sind. Abgesehen von der Tendenz von der

Geschichte des Standards wegzugehen um verschiedene Varietäten zu behandeln, haben sich die Bücher auch in ihrem didaktischen Fokus geändert. Während ältere Texte meist ihre Version der englischen Sprachgeschichte einfach erzählen, umfassen neuere Publikationen oft Fragen zum Text und laden die Studierenden damit ein sich kritisch mit dem Text und der Geschichte auseinanderzusetzen. Dadurch erscheinen die modernen Texte oft weniger dogmatisch als ältere. Ausserdem wurde eine verstärkte Tendenz zu Reflexionen über die historische Sprachwissenschaft selbst festgestellt, da immer mehr Bücher auch hierzu Kapitel beinhalten.

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